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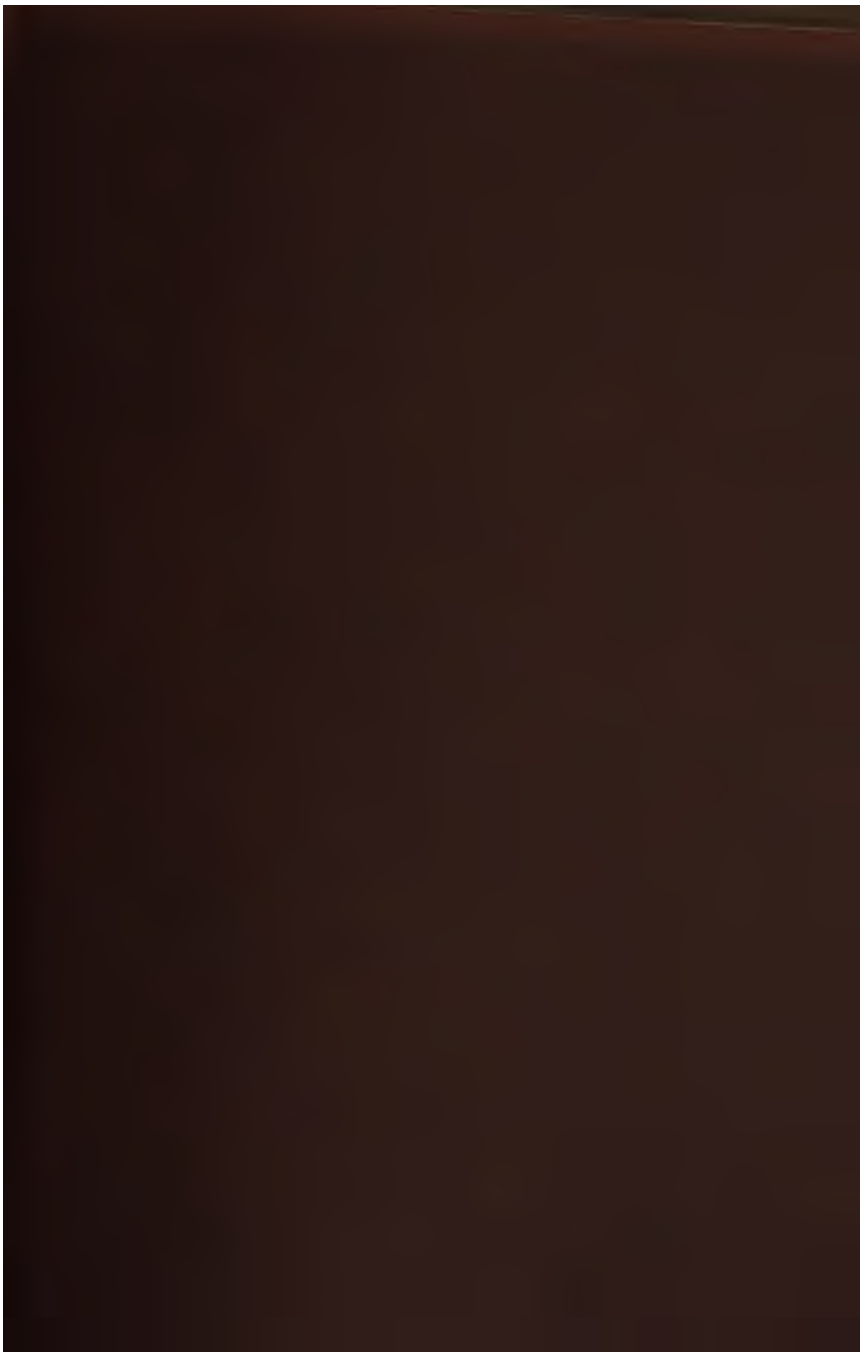
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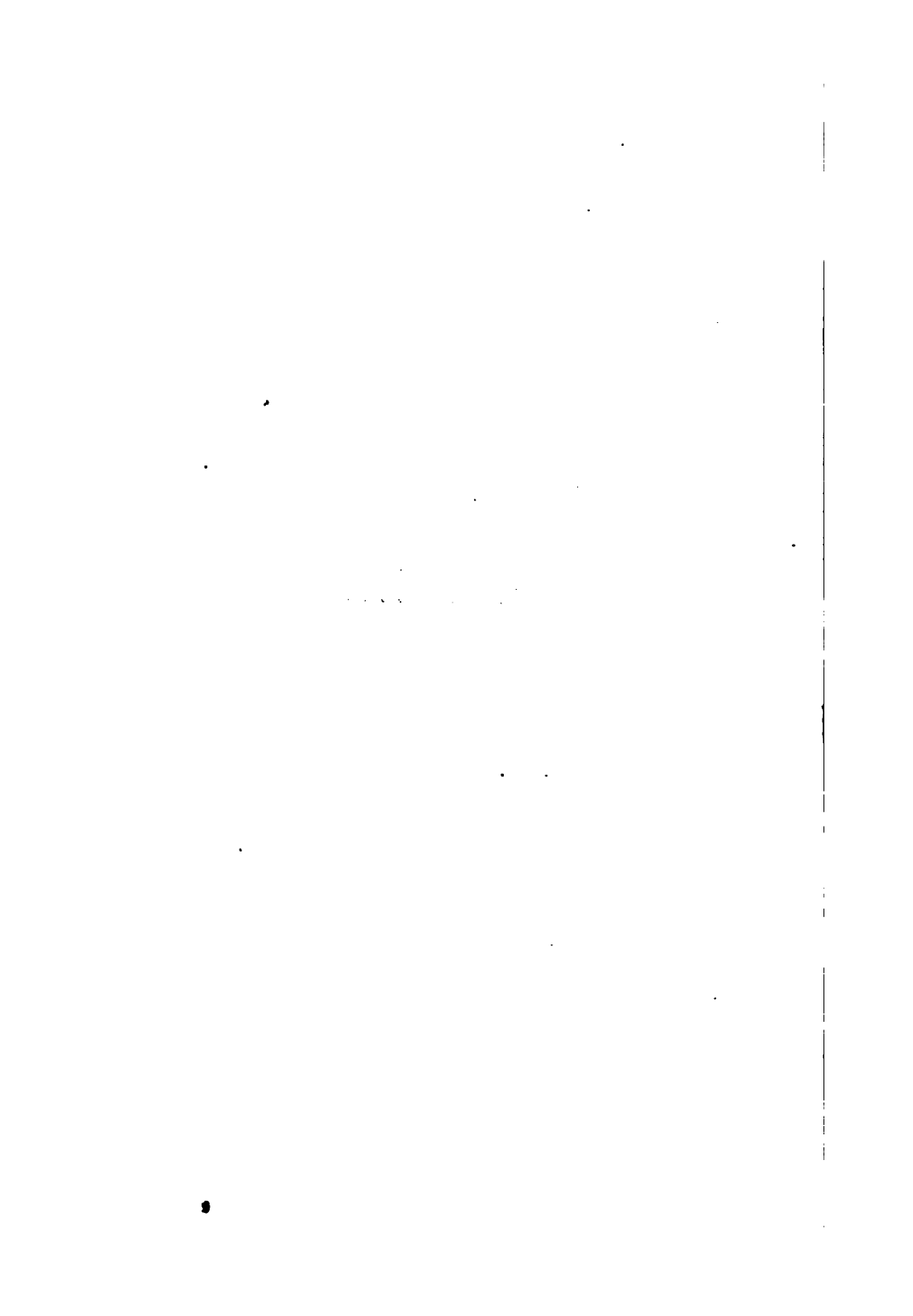




**AUNT JUDITH'S RECOLLECTIONS.**





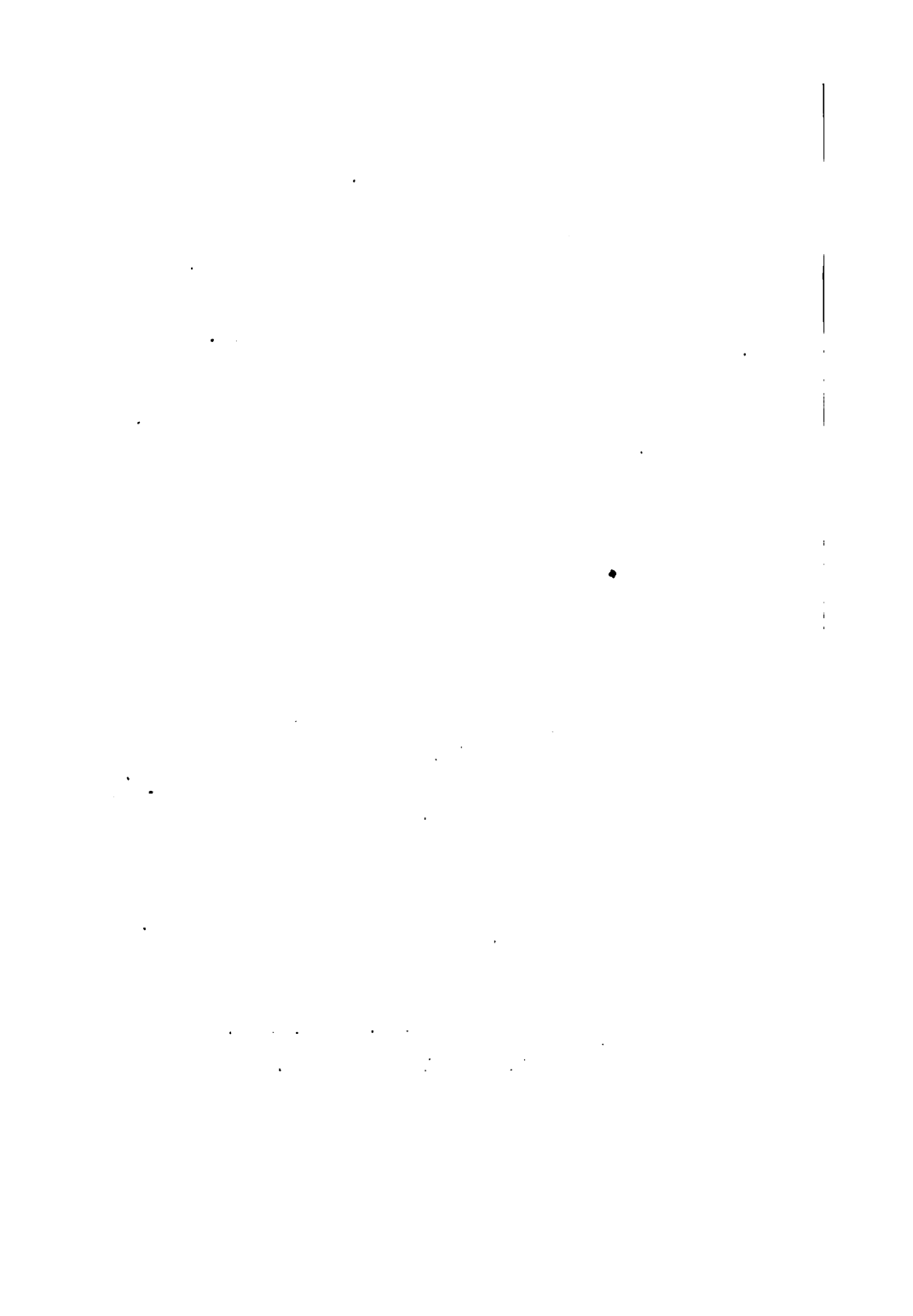












# Aunt Judith's Recollections.

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## CHAPTER I.

IT was forty years ago, my child—forty years ago—aye, nearer upon fifty, now I come to think of it. And that's a long piece out of the longest life. I've seen many a change in my time, Annie; and if once you set me off, I may go on till you get tired, dear niece. You must stop me when you are, that's all. But maybe, as you are put forth to begin your journey, much as I was, it may not be amiss for you to hear some of the things which have been taught to me as I came along the road; only, you see, I may grow garrulous.

Yes; I've seen a good deal in my time, and travelled more than most, though I never went out of England; for somehow it has not been my lot to settle down long in any one place. The Good Shepherd has been often "putting me forth." If it had not been that "He went before me," I should have been in evil case many and many's the time. But He knew what He was

no need. Everything we wanted we found in the church ; and he was like a father among his people too. Every one knew him ; and his holy life was an epistle which might be known and read of all men.

It was when we were " put forth " out of that fold that we first found out on what sort of days we were fallen, Annie. I cannot call the present times evil, when I look back fifty years, my dear ; for there has been a wonderful kindling up since then ; a light here and a light there set up in many a dark place ; and it seems to me that the holy fire spreads, and that you may hope to see better days still before you die.

I shall have many things to tell you about that by-and-by ; but you want me to begin with my own story ; don't you ?

Well, it was in November when our great troubles came upon us. Our father had come home in the spring, and left the navy, having made up his mind to have no more to do with fighting and war. He had suffered a great deal more than he ever told us in his letters during the last voyage in which he served ; and he had been wounded more than once. So he could honourably leave the service ; and he thought to have many happy years with us. But I never shall forget how his countenance changed when we brought him into the house, and he first looked at mother. I think he saw at once what none of us would allow ourselves to see, and gave up

hope from that first evening—though he never said so to me.

All that summer he never left her, except when he was forced to do so ; and I was more free to go in and out than I had been for a long time, though mother was always anxious for us to have as much change as we could of a healthy sort.

But several times he was obliged to be away for a day or two at a time, in order to settle matters about our property, and then I, being the eldest, was always left in charge of her. And I can see now how all the care and anxiety about her, and all the care that I had shared with her, were intended to prepare me for my after life, though there were many who pitied me for being made to grow old before my time.

That last time that father had to leave us was, as I said, in November ; and a lovely November it was that year. October had been a wet month, and mother had been kept a prisoner in the house for weeks ; but just then the weather took up, and we had quite a return of summer.

I remember so well that morning that my father went, intending if he could to return before night, she said to me that she would like a turn in the garden. We had a very large one, and it had been all newly gravelled that year, on purpose that she might have a nice dry path to walk on whenever she could get out.

I fetched her things; and when I had dressed her, I gave her my arm, and we went out. How she seemed to enjoy it, and to admire everything! We walked quite a nice little distance, and then stopped to get a peep at the town through an opening which our gardener had made in the trees.

There was a bench placed there; and she sat down for a moment to rest. Oh, I remember as if it were yesterday asking her if she did not approve of Wallis's work, and pointing out the church, and several of our neighbours' houses, besides a part of the ivy-clad old ruin in which the owls used to live, all which we could see through this new opening. That ruin, you know, my dear, used once to belong to the Archbishop of Canterbury; but it was ceded by Cranmer to King Henry VIII., and granted by him to the North family. One end of it is now used as a barn.

Mother had not liked a walk so much for a long time; and I felt so pleased, and flattered myself that she was getting better. I remember telling her so, and saying how much I hoped for her sake that we should have a mild winter. "Father says that you must not go out much more until spring comes," I said; "but really it seems to me that you are much stronger again. Why, to-day you are walking quite firmly, and hardly leaning on my arm at all. Besides, see what a distance we have come! It must have been just the excitement of his coming home that

made you worse at first; but you are getting over that now: and how nice it is to think of our Christmas all together this year! Aren't you glad, mother dear, that father has left the navy, and that we shall never have those dreary times again which we have gone through so often, when we have listened to the howling winds at night until our hearts ached, and longed and longed to know if he were safe; or else pined and pined for letters, and wondered why they did not come? Oh, mother, those times were quite enough to account for your being weak and poorly; but they are over now, and we shall soon have you as you used to be."

I shall never forget her look at me as she said,—

"Our times are in God's hands, Judith. We know not what shall be on the morrow."

And then she added after a little pause, "But I don't think we can look for a mild winter, my child. When were berries ever so thick on any bushes as they are this year?"

And she pointed out a large holly-bush which in the sunlight was just then looking quite resplendent.

"Then we must just keep you in a hot-house, dearest mother," I replied; "and you won't find that such dreary work now father is back with his endless store of delightful true tales. That is a little set-off against his long absences; isn't it? But you are getting tired now, mother," I added, "and we must turn at once; for it will never

do for me to let you knock yourself up while he is away."

In truth, I saw a change come over her face which frightened me. I thought I had let her walk too far, and looked about for some one to give her another arm back to the house; but I couldn't see any one: so I had to do the best I could. And truly she was so wasted and slight, being a little woman naturally, that I could easily have carried her if she would have let me, and if I had not troubled too much.

She didn't seem at first to feel the change in herself so much as I saw it; and only answered, "Poor father! Sometimes now I blame myself for not telling him all the truth about myself when we wrote last year; but, you see, I thought I should have a later opportunity before he sailed for home."

A fit of coughing prevented her from saying more; and she stood still, and leaned on me until she could recover herself. I recollect putting my arms round her to support her just as if she had been a child; and after we had started again we hadn't gone many steps before Nancy appeared at the door, and I beckoned her to come to us.

We got her in at last, and laid her on the sofa; but for some minutes she gasped and panted fearfully. The others had come to us then, Charley and little Annie—

Just Annie, my dear. She was but a child of ten

years old then, and very small if her age. But when we saw mother so weak and ill, her little face grew almost as pale as hers; while Charley whispered to me in a hoarse, tremulous tone,—

"I do wish my father were back."

"She is better now," I said, after a minute, as the cough became quieter, and I saw that the wine we had given her was taking effect. For the parlor was getting way to a hectic finish. And I am so glad that he did not come just then," I added: "because he always looks so miserable when she is the least worse, that it almost breaks my heart."

But Charley did not answer. He only continued to gaze at mother; and I thought afterwards that the terrible truth to which I was hurrying my eyes had even then forced itself into his mind. But the sun was going down, and I felt the room growing chilly; so I went Annie off for mother's shawl, while I put on a fresh log as quietly as possible, that I might not rouse her from the slumber into which she was falling. Then, when Annie came back with the shawl, we two sat down quietly beside her while we sent Charley off to watch and prevent our father from coming in too suddenly, and disturbing her. I remember his lingering look back even now as he left the room.

So more than an hour passed while we sat like two stone afraid to stir. Then all at once we heard quick steps under the window, and then came a ringing peal at the bell.



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So more than an hour passed while we sat like two mice afraid to stir. Then all at once we heard quick steps under the window, and then came a ringing peal at the bell.

"Oh! father, how could you?" I murmured, as I saw poor mother open her eyes; but still she looked refreshed, and with a flush of pleasure she said,—

"There's your father at last. Go and fetch him in. I want to hear what he has been doing."

Annie ran to the door while I shook up her pillow and put her comfortable; but oh, what a look of disappointment came over her face when the next minute Charley entered, saying,—though he said it as quietly as he could,—

"It was not father at all, mother; only a boy sent with a message from him to say that his business is not finished, and that he cannot be back to-night. I gave the young rascal a precious good scolding, though, for making such an uproar at the bell. He was so quick that I couldn't stop him."

"Boys don't think much," she answered, smiling faintly. "But go, Judith, and see that the young messenger is refreshed."

I went; and then I heard what Charley already knew, and what he had endeavoured to conceal under his fit of indignation about the bell; namely, that a whole family whom we knew in the village where our father was, were down with fever, and one not expected to live. Charley slipped out after me, and whispered, 'Father must have been at that house, you know; his business took him there; and he's sure to go again, now he

knows they're in trouble; and that fever is so terribly infectious."

"Yes," I said, and would fain have stayed out of the room a bit until I could recover from the fright; but I heard myself called, and was obliged to return. Mother looked hard at us several times as we fidgeted about the room before she said anything; but the first time I went close to her, she took hold of my hand, and gazing steadily into my face, asked me,—

"Child, is there anything amiss? Tell me the whole truth. Is your father well?"

"Quite well, mother," I replied, trying to look surprised. "He said so particularly, and hoped to be home early to-morrow." But I added, seeing that she would not be put off, "Of course we are all disappointed that he cannot come home; and besides, we hear that the Davidsons are ill."

"Ill!" she said; and when I told her of what, I could tell that all that was in our minds rushed into hers at once; and though she said nothing about it, we could all see how depressed she was; and many times during the evening we noticed that her lips moved as if in prayer.

The hours passed heavily away, though after a bit she tried to talk; and when she did that, Charley and I racked our brains to think of anything that might divert her thoughts; for we were frightened at the idea of one of her bad nights after that afternoon's attack.

At last, to our great joy, little Annie hit upon the most likely subject in the world, by asking mother some question about the Danish missions in Tranquebar, of which she had heard father speaking.

"Ah!" she said, "I wanted to know myself, dear," looking interested in a moment; "but my cough was so troublesome that I lost half of the story. Couldn't either of you tell the child all about it?" she added, looking at me.

And Charley began at once,—

"I think it was about five and thirty years ago, mother, that Dr. Lutkins, who was chaplain to the king of Denmark, started the idea that they ought to send people out to teach the heathen in their colonies about Christianity."

"Yes," said mother, interrupting him; "I wonder when that notion will come into English people's heads too. I think it is time it did. Charley, how would you like to go?"

"Oh! I am not good enough, mother," he returned, colouring a little. "You must find somebody like Ziegenbalg. That was the name of the man whom the king found, I believe; and he was at college at Halle when it was proposed to him. Another man named Plutschow went with him; and I think I am very clever to remember all these names. Father says he saw them both when he was out there the first time, and some

other missionaries who had joined them also, besides some of their converts. The two first are dead now. They worked so hard that they shortened their lives, and were treated shamefully, too, at first, by the Danish governors there, in spite of having been sent by the king. Besides, the climate is hot and unhealthy for Europeans; and they had to learn two languages, Portuguese, and Tamul. However, I forgot to tell you that Ziegenbalg paid a visit to England, and saw our late King George I.; and he favoured him—that's something, mother; and then some Society of ours for promoting Christian knowledge gave him books and a printing press: so we English have done something. And this last time father was out, he saw the first native minister, a man named Aaron, who wore a long white robe."

"And there are hundreds of Christians now in Tranquebar and Madras," said our mother, her eyes quite sparkling with interest; "poor people, Charley, who would never have learned of a Saviour, so far as we can see, but for good Ziegenbalg. Ah! he was one of those who have turned many to righteousness, and shall shine as the stars for ever. Who wouldn't envy him?"

And after that she talked a good while about the sort of lives she wished us all to live, and what kind of things she coveted for us. She told us, too, about good Hans Egede, another Danish missionary who had braved the cold and frost of Greenland, as Ziegenbalg did the heat

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of India, through love to Christ, and pity for the poor Esquimaux; and who had only come home worn out with his work three or four years before.

Mother was always carried out of herself, and forgot her own troubles, when she talked about such things as these. And we were so glad that she had got upon them, that we encouraged her to talk on and on, though we little dreamed how very nearly it was to be our last talk with her. My brother went out of the room soon afterwards; and then I said,—

“Mother, if Charley were some day inclined to be a missionary, would you really let him go?”

“That is a question with which I shall never have anything to do, Judith,” she said earnestly; “but I can tell you this,—did I but know that he was really Christ’s, and that the desire to be a messenger for Him was in his heart, I should . . . feel one burden off my heart.”

I knew that she did not mean to end her sentence so, and that she had changed her words to avoid giving me pain; so I only answered by a deep sigh; and we dropped the subject.

But I went to bed that night with a great load at my heart.

## CHAPTER II.

DID you ever remark, Annie, what a difference a good night's rest seems to make in one's feelings about the future? I mean how much lighter and brighter it often looks when we get up in the morning than it did over-night. And yet perhaps we are all the while only just those few hours nearer to some coming trouble.

Well, that was just my case when I awoke on the morning after that long talk with mother. I had wanted to be with her that night; but she wouldn't hear of it. She was "no worse than usual," she said; "and Nancy could well take care of her; I must get a good sleep." So, though that seemed a thing quite out of the question to me, I had to submit, and retire to my own room, which was the adjoining one to hers.

For some time I sat listening to every movement; but when at length the too familiar hacking, wearing cough ceased, and all was quiet, I lay down to wait impatiently for the dawn, or to dream uneasily;—so I thought. But it was not long ere my eyelids grew heavy, and a very



grateful feeling of repose came over me; and soon I was fast asleep. It was just that sound, healthy, soothing slumber, which you, I dare say, Annie, well know. I do not often sleep so, now; but then I am not so young as I was.

When I awoke, the day had fully dawned, and with the shades of night my dark forebodings seemed to have vanished; and I jumped up quickly, threw my dressing-gown around me, and hastened to my mother's bedside to ask the daily question,—

“What sort of a night, dear mother?”

And my light-heartedness was increased by seeing a look of refreshment on my dear invalid's face also, as she answered cheerfully,—

“Better than usual, my own Judy. I was very tired, and slept a good deal. And I have been thinking that as your father cannot well be home for some hours, you shall get out and do some little commissions for me before he comes.”

“Very well, mother,” I answered, kissing her; “then I will make haste.”

And soon I was serving out the breakfast in such a gleesome mood that Charley looked hard at me, as if he thought me a very incomprehensible person.

It was another fine morning, warm and sunny; and the few leaves still left on the trees seemed to dance gaily in the sunlight, while the little birds chanted forth their

songs of joy at this reprieve from winter; and I heard the sheep bleating, and the cattle lowing in the pastures around.

My only regret was that after yesterday's experiment it could not be prudent to try another walk that day for mother.

So I walked briskly to the parsonage, taking a path which led round the side of the house; and perceived as I turned the corner that the vicar was just then letting out a poor woman with a babe in her arms. I waited a moment, until she should be gone, as she seemed a stranger to me, and caught the words,—

“You see, sir, they give no hopes, none at all, of poor mother's getting over it. And when it comes to that, and all on a sudden like, it do seem to go nigh to break one's heart.”

“Ah! my good soul,” replied the dear old man; “but you are not the only one in such a case. I heard the like but yestermorn of one whose memory will be fragrant here for many a year, and was but now pondering on the sorrow which must even already be rending her husband's and children's hearts well-nigh in twain. Aye, but it would be but scanty comfort for ye if this were all I had to say. 'Tis little to know that we have companions in grief. I tell ye more. When these blessed ones put off their earthly tabernacles, and we lay them with their kindred dust, we shall do it in sure and certain hope of

a joyful resurrection. Hold ye fast by that ; for what can I say more to ye ?”

Then, with a kindly grasp of her hand, he bid her God speed, and was turning back to the house—his few snowy locks, some of which were gathered into a cue behind, floating in the breeze, and making him look most venerable—when I went forward and accosted him.

I seemed to have taken him by surprise ; for he started when he saw me.

“ Well, my child,” he said ; “ my *poor* child,” it seemed as if he would have said ; for there was deep compassion in his tone and manner ; but perhaps my cheerful countenance checked him, for he stopped, and looked gravely and steadily into my face, and then added, hesitatingly,—

“ What are the news to-day ? ”

“ Oh ! good, I do think, dear Master Underwood,” I said. “ Mother frightened us all, yesterday ; but she has had such a good night ! And now we think it was only because she had walked too far.”

“ Walked ! ” he repeated, and shook his head as he preceded me into the room where the old lady was always busy in the morning ; and I thought I heard him say in an undertone,—

“ She does not know ; they cannot have told her.”

The words sent a pang to my heart which drove all the colour from my cheeks ; so that when I entered, I believe Mrs. Underwood wondered what her husband

meant ; for she looked to him as if for an explanation. But he kept silence ; and she therefore only bade me be seated, in her usual kind way. So I was obliged to state my errand, which I did very mechanically, first asking the good vicar to call on my mother that day, as she had much to say to him, and then begging to know the quantity of linsey-woolsey that would be required to make all the school-girls new Christmas frocks, as my mother wished to pay for it that year. "She bid me say that she will see to the making also," I added, though I had nearly forgotten that part of the message.

"Surely not, surely not," returned Mrs. Underwood, earnestly. "Nay, my child ; it is time she gave over such work as that. You and little Annie, with Nancy's help, must see to it."

I hastened to assure her that mother should have no fatigue—only give directions ; and while I was speaking, there stepped forward a middle-aged dame, a dear friend of ours, who had been busy over a basket in a deep recess in the room, and whom therefore I had not perceived, to assure me that any assistance which she could give was at my service.

"Oh ! good Mistress Simmons !" I remember exclaiming, as I warmly returned her embrace ; "then would you kindly come and help me purchase the stuff ? I have never yet done such a thing without my mother."

"Poor dear !" she answered, kissing me, and sighing ;

and without another word she tied on the hood which she had laid aside, and we went out together.

"God bless you, my child," said the good old gentleman, as I bade him farewell; and as his wife reiterated his words I saw that her eyes were filled with tears.

"It is the very first time that I ever was glad to get out of that dear house," I exclaimed, giving a sort of sigh of relief. "Oh, why is it that people will not believe me when I say mother is better? Surely I must know, who am with her nearly always."

"Those who are much with a sick person are not always the best judges," answered kind Mrs. Simmons, as gently as she could. "Indeed, who can be expected to know so well as the doctor?"

I looked hard at her; for I did not yet know what most of our friends did of his opinion.

"However," she went on, "I must say that I have known many persons recover after they were given up by the leech; and there are remedies which they despise, in which I put great faith. Now, in this very basket, my love, I have herbs and leaves for making a dozen different sorts of drinks, very strengthening and reviving; besides some other little matters. And the squire's lady has an excellent recipe which I have lost. We will call and ask for it as we pass the hall, if you will promise to do your best to get dear Mrs. Conyngham to take the stuff when I have mixed it. I should have recommended oil of swallows

before anything else, only that as the birds are already gone we could not get it."

"And that is made in such a dreadful way, too, ma'am; isn't it?" I ventured to say, feeling considerably vexed that the conversation had taken this turn; for I knew well enough that the point was nearly the only one on which my mother and our friend never could see alike. "Don't you pound the poor swallows alive in a mortar?" I added. "Mother never would take anything that had caused so much suffering to poor little innocents. It would be of no use to ask her."

"What are the pains of a few birds compared to your mother's life, my girl?" cried the good lady, indignantly. "Why, Judith, I am ashamed of you!"

"Pray, do not blame me," I cried passionately, and bursting into tears; "I would try anything, anything to do her good."

"Will you try to get her to take my prescription?" persisted Mrs. Simmons.

"Indeed, I will ask her," I said; "but you know she has no faith in those things, unless it be a herb tea, or a drink made of ash leaves, or lime juice, or such-like. And when she is under the doctor, she always will stick to what he gives. Is this stuff very nauseous, ma'am?"

"I think," she said, "that it contains one or two ingredients against which she would revolt; such as a very

delicate sort of snail with a little of the earth in which it is found; but these are overpowered by the strong ale and herbs which are added. Besides, we must not let her know all that is put in it. But here we are; I will not keep you a minute."

"Please excuse my going in," I pleaded. "I will walk on slowly."

And Mrs. Simmons seemed glad to pay her visit alone.

She came out, as she had promised, very quickly; and after that we talked of other things, made our purchase, left a message at the school, and were just turning homewards, when, at a bend in the road, we suddenly came upon Charley.

To say that he was looking agitated when we met him would be a mild expression. His face was paler than I had ever seen it, while at the same time it had that blackish hue which a sudden shock causes in some persons.

"Oh, Charley," I cried, seizing his hand, "what is the matter?"

"Father is taken with the fever," he answered, in a low, husky tone. "The news have just come; and how is mother ever to be told?"

"The fever!" I almost shrieked. "Oh, Charley, we cannot bear it. This is too much; too much!"

My strength was gone in a moment, and all the power

of looking on the bright side of things, which long habit had given me, was gone too. Hitherto, for my mother's sake, I had always refused to believe evil tidings ; or, at any rate, had persisted in persuading myself, and often her, that all would turn out well at last. But with Charley's words hope seemed to vanish, and with it the power of action. I felt at once that this shock would certainly snap the slight thread of mother's life ; and at the same time I seemed to lose sight of the possibility of our father's recovery. Indeed, considering how fatal this fever had been in our neighbourhood, and how his constitution had been shaken by hardships and illnesses abroad, this was not much to be wondered at.

I sank down on a bank by the roadside, murmuring incoherently, and shivering with cold. My brother had never seen me give way before ; and now he was alarmed at what he had done. I think a sort of resentful feeling of indignation at my good spirits in the morning had caused him to speak thus abruptly ; but he was all kindness and tenderness when he saw me in this condition.

I don't know what they did for me ; but when, after a time, I recovered a little of my self-possession, I found myself in a cottage which I well knew, and its mistress administering some kind of warm drink, while Mrs. Simmons and Charley were chafing my hands and feet. Then a violent burst of tears came to my relief, and the words, " Judith, Judith, mother wants you," uttered by



some one, seemed to restore me to a recollection of the true state of things, and of the necessity of action. "I cannot tell her," I said; and then I became conscious that another message had been sent to Mr. Underwood, with a request that he would come down at once.

### CHAPTER III.

LET me see; I was in Mrs. Toolly's cottage when we were interrupted yesterday; wasn't I, my dear? And of the next few days I have very little to tell, because I knew little of what passed, being mostly in a dreamy, half-conscious state, and knowing scarcely more than that we were all utterly miserable.

How I got home I never can remember, nor what happened for some hours afterwards. It was quite evening when I was taken to my mother's room. She knew all then, and was in some degree calm, though the change which that short time had wrought in her was such as otherwise it might have taken weeks to accomplish. Yet, notwithstanding her weakness, they told me that at first she had declared she would go to her husband.

Charley was standing by her, I recollect; and little Annie was sitting on the foot of the bed, weeping bitterly. I never left her after that; though all my old power to cheer her was gone. I had thought myself strong to bear trouble before; but now I was utterly weak; and, what

was worse, I seemed to have no power to turn me unto the Strong for strength.

Four days only passed, during which we got messages frequently; but they never contained any glimmer of hope; and at last there came the fatal intelligence. Mother was sinking rapidly then; and I remember her look and words so well.

"I shall not be a widow long," she said; "and I *know now* that my dear fatherless children will not be forsaken."

We had but one near relation in the world; and that was our father's only sister, Aunt Judith, after whom I had been named. Had she been in England, I believe that dearest mother would have died without one single care or regret; but she was away on the continent, with an orphan nephew of whom she had taken charge, and could not be home for many months.

Therefore there was no alternative but to send for a second cousin of her own, who lived in London, and entrust us to his care until she returned. By mother's wish a messenger was immediately dispatched to him with an urgent request that he would come down at once.

I knew little, because I cared little, about these arrangements, my whole soul being engaged in watching our dying parent. A violent hæmorrhage having come on since our father's death, it was but little that she could

say to us; and if not absorbed in prayer, she seemed straining her ears for the sound of carriage wheels, her desire being great to see Colonel Cooper before she died.

It was on the evening of the third day after our father went to his rest that he came. Nearly all day we had been watching by her bedside, expecting every hour to be her last. She had spoken a little to each of us in turn, just a few parting words; and after that she had lain half dozing, and with all her senses evidently dulled. Dear old Mr. Underwood was with us, and from time to time he reminded her that she was not alone in the dark valley, or bid her remember the everlasting arms in which she was certainly carried.

"*I feel* them," she said once, with a sweet smile, and closed her eyes again; while we suppressed our sobs as much as we could, that we might not disturb her peace. And so we watched on for I suppose another half-hour, almost holding our breath, and scarcely expecting to hear that dear voice again, when suddenly Nancy, who was on the opposite side of the bed to where I stood, gave a start, looked at me, and left the room. Directly after we heard the house door opened gently, and a man's voice asking,—

"Am I in time?"

For the door of mother's room was standing open, in order to afford her all the air that was possible, her

breathing being terribly laboured ; and the house was so hushed that we could hear every sound.

Nancy answered only by a sob. She seemed to take advantage of being out of the room to give way to her feelings. But at the top of the stairs she checked herself again, and made a sign to Colonel Cooper to wait in the doorway while she came forward.

"Speak to her, Mistress Judith," she said to me. "Tell her who is come. Maybe it will rouse her."

I looked to Mr. Underwood in bewilderment, feeling that it would be cruel to remind her of what only concerned ourselves now ; but when he said decidedly, "Yes ; speak to her, my child : your voice will be best ;" I put my lips to her ear, and said,—

"Mother, mother darling, the Colonel is come."

Once or twice I repeated the words, and then she seemed to become conscious that her last wish had been granted ; for there came over her face a beaming heavenly expression of gratitude ; and we soon understood that we were all to go away, and leave her with him. We only needed to retire to the farther end of the room, which was a large one ; for her voice was too low to be heard by any except a person quite close to her ; and her sight was so dim that she scarcely saw any one.

What passed we never knew, and never probably shall know ; but his very kind, gentle manner, and the way in which he seemed to understand and respect our grief,

made as favourable an impression upon all of us as anything was capable of making at that moment.

An hour after that we were quite orphans ; and in less than a week we three left our dear old home, with everything and everybody that we had hitherto cared for ; and I have never visited Mayfield since.

We should not have been so quickly hurried away, but that the fever had begun to spread into our neighbourhood ; for no one could have been more considerate than our cousin.

One is apt to think one's trials greater than those which others have to bear, Annie ; yet I know well that ours might have been far heavier ; seeing that we might have been left penniless instead of well provided for ; or our lot have been cast with unfeeling people ; or we three might have had to separate at once. Still, I often have thought that but few are called to give up so much that is precious at one time ; for we had been a very strongly attached family, and had had an unusually happy home, and many dear, kind friends.

It was a "putting forth" which *seemed* to us and others rough and hard, unlike the dealing of a tender shepherd ; but God's ways are not as our ways, my dear. We must learn to trust, and not expect to see the meaning of everything as we go along the road. I can understand a good deal now which I couldn't then ; and so it will be with all His sheep.

And now began our London life—a life so different from that which we had hitherto lived, that we seemed to be in another world altogether.

I do not remember much about the first part of the journey, though I know that we went in the squire's coach to meet the stage that travelled from Brighthelmstone to London, and that, as we drove through Mayfield, clad in our deep mourning dresses, many people came out to get a last look at Captain Conyngham's three poor orphans, most of whom were weeping. We stopped one night at an inn which was situated somewhere about the middle of the whole distance; but though it was the first inn I had ever entered, nothing therein made any impression on my mind; in fact, so tired were we all that we thankfully retired to bed as soon as we had drunk a dish of tea; and when there, we slept heavily until we were summoned to make ready to resume our journey.

Our cousin preferred the outside of the coach; so we were left to the companionship of a very fat old gentleman and his little granddaughter, the former of whom dozed a great deal, having in the first instance given to the child many injunctions about being good, and trying to comfort her little fellow-traveller.

On that second day we took rather more interest in the scenes through which we passed. Charley got up outside with the Colonel; and, as the stranger child had already

travelled that way more than once, she had a good deal to tell which we did not know ; and thus Annie was drawn out to chat with her. By degrees her confidence was won—for she was of a very sociable disposition—and so it came about that towards dusk she was telling her own story of the last few weeks, and the two children were quietly weeping together, when the old gentleman suddenly awoke, and, seeing how things were, gave his granddaughter so many reproving looks—I suppose for what he considered her bad management—that she hid her face in her hands, and remained so quiet in her little corner, that very soon she had fallen fast asleep.

Nor was Annie long in following her example, and in a few moments I perceived that the old grandfather had again taken up the thread of his napping ; so that I was left to my own meditations.

As for me, I had neither wept nor slept that day ; and I remember being very wide awake, though wrapped in sad reflections, when all in a moment the coach seemed to come to a sudden stand, and we were thrown one against another, while at the same instant we heard several low exclamations, uttered by those outside, mingled with terrible oaths, and the slashing of the whip and several pistol-shots in rapid succession.

It was quite dark then ; and for an instant I was uncertain whether our aged companion was thoroughly aroused to a sense of our position, the children having



awaked shrieking so loudly with terror that I could not hear anything else distinctly ; but in less time than it takes to tell there was a flash of light into the coach, which showed me at the same moment the rough visage of a man's face, and our old gentleman hastily drawing a pistol from behind him. Then I felt that the horrible man was opening the door ; and I saw that he too was armed. I thought it was all over with us, and my senses seemed leaving me. There was a crash of glass ; and I heard our protector say, ' Take that, you villain ! ' Then a pistol-shot and a heavy fall ; and I knew no more for some minutes.

When I came to myself, the old gentleman was dropping something from a small pocket-flask into my mouth, my head being thrown back on Annie's shoulder ; and she, poor child ! was entreating me to awake and speak to her, while her hot tears fell upon my forehead. The chill evening air was blowing in through the broken glass, and we were driving at full speed along the road ; but the voices had ceased, and there were no more sounds of deadly strife.

They asked me if I was hurt anywhere, and made me move all my limbs ; by which I knew that they had feared lest in the struggle a shot should have reached me. " Oh, the dreadful man ! " I said, shuddering at the recollection of his horrible face, which even now I can recall to mind, and which haunted me for several nights after-

wards. But they assured me that he could do us no harm now.

"Dead! Did you kill him, sir?" I cried.

"No, I think not," said the old man; "I only meant to disable him. But it was no time to stand about niceties."

"And the others? How many were there?" I asked.

"Can't say, my girl," he answered. "We had trouble enough to shake them off, without stopping to count the dead and wounded. When we alight, we shall know more from those outside."

And then he put his head out of the window, and shouted to Charley that I was all right again.

We learnt afterwards that though the number of our assailants was never ascertained, yet that there were so many that they seemed confident of success, and that it was only because our company were not only very well armed, but very self-possessed and determined, that we were able to get the better of them.

It seemed that they knew of our carrying, not only mail-bags, but a considerable sum of money. However, they got nothing by their enterprise, except a good many wounds and bruises; while three of them, those who had seized the horses, were left for dead.

It seems very strange that in a highly civilized country like ours one could not travel without exposure to dangers such as this; but really at that time they were of very common occurrence.

After a long stage we stopped to change horses at an inn, and then our cousin told us how bravely Charley had behaved.

After that nothing particular occurred; and we reached London not very long after our time. It was quite late in the evening when we arrived in Queen Square; so we were got to bed at once; and being much exhausted both by grief, fright, and fatigue, as well as somewhat shy of strangers, Mrs. Cooper had little difficulty in persuading us to stay there all the next day, and indeed a good deal for some days to come.

After that we were allowed to do much as we pleased for a month or so. It would have been a relief to me to have had some real duty to perform; for what had been my life-work was gone, while now I seemed to have little to attend to except my own improvement; and how my heart ached for that old work, no one can ever know but myself. There was a school within a few doors of us, to which Annie was to be sent daily; while I, being too old to go to school regularly, was to attend for French and music, and, if I chose, for flower painting; but all this could not be thought of until after the Christmas holidays.

I remember that, always having a dread of being shut up in London streets, it was some little comfort to us to find ourselves on the very outskirts of the great city, there being nothing between the last houses in the square

and the villages of Highgate and Hampstead. It was pleasant to have such a lovely view from our windows, and fields and meadows and trees close to our door. But still we soon found that we were to live no country life, rambling about as we used to do in freedom and safety; for Mrs. Cooper would never hear of our going outside the door without the old butler or some one to protect us, Charley only being considered sufficient in the immediate neighbourhood, and in the very middle of the day. We were very much annoyed at this, and felt as if we were being treated either as babies or as prisoners; but I have since had reason to believe that our cousin was quite right; for the streets of London were in a terrible state then; and no one, either male or female, could walk abroad without incurring serious risk of annoyance. You would hardly believe what a difference the late new Acts of Parliament have made, unless you had lived in London before that time. They were a good beginning to our present good King's reign. Even then we soon found that there was a great cry for reformation in such matters; but still, you see, at first all this care was a great annoyance to us.

It was on Christmas Day that year that the *great frost* set in, the like of which has hardly ever been known in England. It lasted until the 17th of February following, and caused most fearful distress. Coals rose to such a price that at length they could hardly be bought for any money; and water was very scarce. I remember that

crowds of poor people used daily to walk about the streets singing their doleful ditties, and that great efforts were made to help them.

Our cousin, Mrs. Cooper, was very active, not only in collecting money, but in distributing it among the poor creatures in our neighbourhood; and the going about with her on such errands was one of the first things in which I took an interest. It seemed so home-like; only that her visits were very different to mother's or father's, or Mrs. Simmons's visits; for they never went to relieve distress without remembering that people have souls as well as bodies; while Mrs. Cooper, I verily believe, would have thought it presumption in any but a clergyman, certainly in a woman, to speak of such things.

Still it was very good for Annie and me to have others to think of at all; and for a little while we were kept busy with our needles, making up all sorts of warm clothing for various boys and girls, sick women, and old people, with whom this distress had made us acquainted.

As for Charley, he was already somewhat occupied with his books, and had a private tutor every day for Latin, in which he was discovered to be backward; because, as Colonel Cooper said, he was of such an age that he could not long remain at school, but ought to make up his mind what he would be.

So, while Mrs. Cooper was occupied in giving her orders about the house, or in making her puddings and

pies (for she was a very domestic person), my little Annie and I sat together sewing. But we were not questioned very closely as to the quantity of work which we accomplished each day, it being quite understood that we must talk, and could only talk of such things as were sure to bring on many a good cry. "Poor young creatures!" I overheard our cousin say one day to a friend. "Their sorrow will wear itself out in time; but it must have its time; and nobody can be company for them just yet, except those who knew them that they have lost."

I felt very grateful to her for that; but it made me long more and more for Aunt Judith, of whom, though I had not seen her for three years, I retained a very pleasant remembrance; for I thought she *did* know them.

After a time Colonel and Mrs. Cooper began to take us drives about London in their coach, and to show us the parks and buildings. The Colonel took a great interest in all new erections or improvements; and, I suppose, thinking that, under our present circumstances, churches were the most proper things to begin with, he would carry us one day to St. George's, Hanover Square; another day to St. Martin's-in-the-Fields; another to St. George's, Bloomsbury; and St. Giles's; all large, handsome churches, and built within the last few years; and then he would explain the different styles of architecture—enlarging on the vast congregations which they would contain.

"And are they all filled?" I remember asking, more for the sake of saying something than for any other reason.

"Well, no," he replied, as if that idea had scarcely occurred to him before; "but I don't know that it is usual to consider the probability of that. It seems proper to have a fine large church in a large parish, and one that would hold the people if they chose to come." And looking at his wife rather than at me, he added, "Church-going is certainly not a rage now-a-days; but I suppose it is a fashion that may come in again for aught we know."

Then I recollected some things which our father had said when he had spent a Sunday in London, and thought of our crowded church at home, till the tears would fill my eyes. Our first Sunday in London, or rather the first Sunday on which we were able to do as other people did, had been a great shock to us. I should have told you about that before.

The first of all was spent almost entirely in bed; and on the second we had such bad colds that we were not allowed to leave the house. But on the third we were able to accompany our cousins to church in the afternoon, which was their usual time for attending, and indeed then the fashionable hour for divine service.

The Colonel did not keep so strictly to his parish church as his wife would have liked; and that Sunday I know we went to one more fashionable than our own, and

one at so great a distance that we were obliged to have the coach out to carry us.

I cannot at all remember the name of this church; but I know that the congregation was a remarkably well-dressed one, though small, and that the singers sat in the gallery facing the pulpit.

There were very few people indeed in the building at the time when the service began, only one here and there scattered about; and the prayers were read by an elderly man in a most imposing-looking wig well powdered. But he had not got far in the service when there was a bustle about the door, which we found was caused by the arrival of some grandees; and then, to our utter amazement, the clergyman paused in his reading, and not only waited while these people advanced up the aisle, but actually stopped and made them a profound bow from the desk, the ladies returning his salutation by the slightest and stiffest of curtsies.

After this you will scarcely wonder that we could not help watching them in their stately progress towards their own pew, where the footmen placed their books; and from which, after a momentary appearance of devotion, they turned to see which of their acquaintances were present, and as they espied each one, would rise and curtsy to some very deeply, and to others in a gracious, condescending manner, apparently according to the esteem in which they held them. You know, at Mayfield no one



thought of noticing the presence of their friends during divine service ; for there we were always taught that we were in a Presence so august that we ought to forget all others. But we soon found that such an idea was unheard of in this congregation ; for each person who entered went through these same formalities, although no others were noticed by the clergyman. Indeed, many of them went so far as to pass little notes to their friends from pew to pew ; and during the prayers the most part of the assembly appeared to think nothing at all of what was going on ; for they paid as little attention as if they were at a play, and at liberty to do just as they liked.

I remember one very fashionably dressed elderly man who came in just when the service was half over, and took his seat in the pew before us, occupying the last place at the further end, so that we had the benefit of a full view of him. From what I have since seen of such gentlemen, I imagine that his toilet had occupied him from two to three hours, and that he had not risen in time to get in earlier. However, that seemed to trouble him but little. He sauntered deliberately up the aisle, held his hat devoutly before his eyes for a couple of seconds, and then turned to look around him, and to bow to his acquaintances before he took his seat. After that he took a pinch or two of snuff, surveyed his attire from time to time, as if to see that he was all right, or gazed about him for the rest of

the service, not appearing to be brought to a recollection of where he was even by the commencement of the sermon, which did recall some of the congregation to at least an attitude of attention, though I am sure I do not know why. It seemed to me a very dry discourse, and, I thought, had nothing in it such as ministers should talk about to their people. But the Colonel thought it very eloquent, and said that the young man who delivered it was the best preacher that he knew. For it was a young man, and not the clergyman who had read prayers; and we were surprised that in his prayer before the sermon he particularly spoke of a noble and illustrious lady there present, and that he said a great deal about her high estate; which seemed to me very odd indeed in a prayer to Almighty God, in whose eyes a beggar is as great as a king on his throne.

However, these two clergymen, with the clerk and the singers, did the service between them; for the congregation were not allowed to join, if they would—not that I think they were so inclined; only when we three began, as we were used, to take our part in the responses, we got such a hushing and silencing from our horror-stricken cousins, that we very soon desisted, and were never again in their presence guilty of such a crime.

Charley came to our room after dinner, that we might read together, and look out texts according to a little plan which our dear old pastor had made for us. I cried out

as soon as I saw him, "Oh! Charley! wasn't it dreadful? What shall we do? Must we always go to churches like that?"

And he looked miserably dull, too, and said he didn't know.

"And only to go to church once, too!" I added.

"Why, you wouldn't care to go twice to such a place; would you?" he said.

But then seeing how down-hearted we were, he began to try to comfort us, like a dear old fellow as he was, and to say that our own parish church might be quite different, and that we might like the parson better, though the Colonel didn't think much of him. Tastes differed; and he might be to our taste; and then, why shouldn't we go in the morning too, if we chose? it was near enough; and so on.

So we tried to cheer up and hope it would be so; and when we got to our reading, and talked of old times, our hearts seemed to draw together; and we felt as if while we had each other we could not be quite miserable.

But Sunday after Sunday passed; and we never found a church one bit like our own at Mayfield; though in some there were more well-behaved people than in others.

Mrs. Cooper never asked us anything about our clergyman at home, or what our church was like; at least, except as regarded the building itself; in fact, she never encouraged us to talk about such things; and when Annie

once expressed surprise at some person's behaviour, she only said,—

“My dear, if you had been looking in your prayer-book, you would not have seen what other people were doing.”

She had a great idea of propriety herself, and such a respect for the outward forms of religion, that it was long before I became aware how utterly opposed she was to the reality. After the customary salutations were over, she remained serious during the rest of the service ; and though there was often some company in the evening, I have frequently seen her reading a serious book early in the day.

No doubt, if it had not been for our recent losses, we should have been expected to do many things, and go to many places of which our parents would not have approved. And many of her fashionable acquaintances would have shortened the period of our, or rather of *my*, seclusion ; for my little sister was far too young to be brought out. But then, as I have said, Mrs. Cooper had her own notions ; and somehow, being a person of considerable character, she contrived to abide by them even while she kept on good terms with all her neighbours. They did not, it is true, make her *very* peculiar, as such principles and practices as those to which I had been accustomed must inevitably have done, in the circle in which she moved ; but still they kept her from many of the excesses, I may say vices, into which her neighbours fell.

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For instance, I soon found that most of the fashionable ladies around, as well as some of the gentlemen, held levées during the time that they were making their toilets, which would be after twelve o'clock. Now Mrs. Cooper had no particular objection to visit any of her friends on these occasions; but for herself she was up too early, and spent too short a time in dressing, to admit of her receiving her guests at that time. She was fashionable without being extreme in her dress; lively and even gay in her manners, without being light; fond of cards, without being a regular gambler; and, in short, a perfect pattern of a respectable worldly woman. And what I have said of her might with equal truth be said of her husband; for they were a well-matched and attached couple, and moreover both were very kind-hearted. Under their roof we were in no danger of seeing vice of any kind; though I must say I have often been struck with the very lenient way in which they spoke of it in others, treating the most open breach of God's law rather as something discreditable than as deadly sin. But I am wandering now from my own story; and you will want to know more of my London life.

I forgot to tell you the Thames was long frozen over that winter, and that shops and booths were erected upon it. Charley delighted in making purchases there; and we were taken for a walk on it several times, once in particular when a fair was being held. Then in time we

visited the parks, and became acquainted with all the places of interest in London ; for Colonel Cooper loved to take young people about ; and having no children of his own, he seemed to enjoy having us under his care. There was plenty of company always coming and going ; so, though we were kept secluded from the regular parties, we saw a great variety of people. We dined at three o'clock, four being, in Mrs. Cooper's estimation, only proper for those persons who chose to be in the extreme of fashion ; and most days the Colonel brought home one or two friends with whom he would discuss politics during the meal : so we thus learnt a good deal of what was going on in the world, which we did not know before ; for, you see, our father having been so much away, we knew perhaps less than most young folks about the ordinary topics of the day. As for myself, I believe that I was hardly aware who was prime minister, although Sir Robert Walpole had then governed the country about eighteen years ; and the first that I learnt about him was that he was being attacked on all sides. Our cousin, however, was one of his warm adherents, and always maintained that the skill with which he had discovered and defeated the Pretender's plots alone entitled him to the thanks of the nation ; but there were some of our visitors who could not forgive him for so tamely enduring what they called the insults which the Spaniards were constantly offering to us. I soon grew weary of these

disputes, and especially of that endless story of Jenkins' ear, of which, however, by the bye, my dear, I dare say you never heard, though, I suppose, it brought on the Spanish war, or rather was an excuse to the war party for bringing matters to a point. An English skipper, named Jenkins, in a skirmish with some Spanish vessel, had had one of his ears cut off. This ear he kept carefully in paper, and exhibited it on all occasions as a proof of his wrongs, until at length the country was wound up to the pitch of avenging them. That was all. But over and over again we heard it, and from all points of view, until I became quite sick of it, little dreaming what all this talk was doing for my brother. However, I shall come to that by-and-by. The only political question in which I ever in my youth felt any real interest was that which concerned poor Maria Theresa, the queen of Hungary. I grew very indignant with one European power after another for forsaking her cause, and eager that England should lend her more efficient assistance; while her adversary, Frederic the Great of Prussia, was my aversion.

No doubt, thousands of young ladies shared my feelings, and I know it was nearly the only subject which I had in common with those with whom I came in contact; but then I certainly was unfortunate in my young lady friends, or rather, I should say, acquaintances; for during my girlhood I never had an opportunity of forming

a real friendship with any one of my own age, all the girls whom I met being in one way or another totally unlike myself, and as uncongenial to me as I believe I was to them.

Annie was more happy in this respect ; for she soon found a very nice little companion among her schoolfellows, a child some year and a half younger than herself, to whom she became tenderly attached.

Little Sophia Howard, how well I can recall her image even at this day, running in and out with Annie all that winter in her little scarlet cardinal, which set off so excellently the blue eyes and fair white skin of the then rosy child !

She was very small of her age, even compared with Annie, and somewhat timid, and for some reason or other it appeared that she was not kindly treated by many of the girls. I think it was this at first which drew out Annie's young heart towards her; for my sister showed almost from her babyhood that same generous sympathy for the oppressed by which you know your aunt to have always been distinguished. And no sooner did Annie begin to show her kindness than little Sophia opened her heart to her with a warmth of which her schoolfellows had supposed her incapable; for they had always stigmatized her as that "cold little thing." It was a long time before I was made acquainted with the real reason of their aversion towards her; but it seems that as soon as in



childish fashion they had sealed their compact of eternal friendship, the matter was confided to Annie under a strict promise of secrecy,—a promise which was faithfully kept ; for my sister only divulged it to me after her young schoolfellow's death.

At this distance of time I cannot clearly remember the circumstances well enough to repeat them to you. All I can tell you is, that it was a true case of conscience, and that the strange dislike with which the other girls regarded the pretty little thing had originated entirely in her refusal to take part in something which she felt to be wrong, or even to promise secrecy regarding it, should her governesses ask questions. In fact, she entered her little protest firmly and decidedly, well knowing, it appears, what would be the consequences ; and when persecution came upon her for righteousness' sake, she seemed to have borne it uncomplainingly, as if she knew it to be a thing of course, though it evidently crushed her gentle spirit.

The child belonged to a family of good position ; and Mrs. Cooper therefore encouraged the intimacy between her and my sister, as perhaps she would not have done had she known the nature of many of those close confabulations which so much amused her. Besides, this friendship was the first thing that seemed really to comfort Annie for those dear ones whom she had lost ; and our cousin's kind heart rejoiced to see her take an interest in anything.

The parents were not religious people; nor did they seem, from what I afterwards heard, to have shown any strong love for their children; at least, with the exception of one son,—their eldest, who afterwards turned out a very wild, dissipated young man, and caused them great trouble. So poor Sophia had hitherto lived a very lonely life; for the teachers, though kind enough in their way, were none of them ladies who understood how to win a child's affections. It was therefore a very kind providence which brought the two little girls together, and one which not only cast a bright beam of sunshine over their young lives, but, as I verily believe, tended in a wonderful way to promote the spiritual welfare of both.

For Annie, it was plainly an answer to our mother's prayers. She left her youngest-born without seeing in the least how she was to be preserved from the evils of this wicked world, though enabled by faith to cast her on the care of the Father of the fatherless; and the deliverance was mainly brought about through the instrumentality of another child, that child being one who had enjoyed far, far less of human teaching than her own had done.

An old nurse, who, however, had at this time long left the family, seems to have sown the seed, and taught Sophia to love her Bible, which henceforth was to be her sole teacher; for, as far as I could learn, the seed never received any human watering, at least until Annie came in her way. Then the child who had felt much took

counsel with the one who had been taught more; and the child of many prayers began to pray.

But all this I did not know until long afterwards; because, though the little girls were both, I believe, fond of me, and Annie in some sense regarded me as a second mother, they took no one into their confidence. Only I did sometimes marvel how it was that while those things for which I used to think I cared so much—such, I mean, as attendance at God's house, the reading of the Scriptures, and prayer—were daily losing their interest for me, my little sister seemed to be getting to love them better and better, so that she would often be poring over her Bible, and remain much longer on her knees than used to be her wont. I don't know that I can say the same about church; for though she joined regularly in the prayers and psalms, finding all her places carefully, and avoiding gazing about her, she did not, that I can remember, ever look interested in the sermons.

## CHAPTER IV.

It is an ill wind that blows no one any good, you know, Annie. I am thinking of that terrible frost, and how, while it caused such suffering to multitudes, it led indirectly to one of the happiest events of my life.

I told you how Mrs. Cooper exerted herself to relieve the distress. Well, she, being a very orderly and methodical sort of person, was dreadfully annoyed with some of her co-workers; and we used to hear a good deal about their unbusiness-like proceedings at dinner-time. But several times I recollect her mentioning the name of Mrs. Scott, who was, she said, a widow lady, with high commendation, and her speaking of her as one who, to use her own words, "knew what she was about." "Only that I have a great suspicion that she favours those wild preachers," she said one day to her husband, "I would cultivate her acquaintance."

"Wild preachers!" he said jokingly; "why, my dear, with all your love of order I wonder that you can give that name to the Methodists!"

"The Methodists," I thought to myself; "I am sure I have heard some talk of them at Mayfield. Yes; it was Mr. Underwood and my dear father who were discussing their doings one day; and Mr. Underwood seemed doubtful about them, and half afraid they were bringing disorder into the Church: but my father was loud in their praise." When I came to think over it, a great deal that I had heard came back to me; and my curiosity, or rather, perhaps, my interest in the matter, was the more thoroughly aroused because it seemed connected with home. A dozen questions sprang to my lips at once, yet I did not ask one of them; for a peculiar feeling which I always had with regard to Mrs. Cooper stopped me, as it often did.

As I have told you this, however, you will not wonder that I was very pleased when, two days after, my cousin came and told me that Mrs. Scott was in the drawing-room waiting to see me, having made the discovery that very morning, from some casual remark of hers, that our dear mother and she had once been acquainted. That of itself was enough to cause a thrill of pleasure in my breast such as I had not felt for weeks; and I remember flying downstairs as if to meet an old friend, deaf to all the remonstrances of Mrs. Norris, whom I heard entreating as I rushed past her, that I would allow her to arrange my hair.

That first meeting with dear Mrs. Scott! I shall never forget it, even though I live to be a hundred and fifty,

Annie. Her first words ring in my ears even now, when I think of it; and ere my cousin could follow me into the room, I was sobbing in her arms.

"Why, Judith!" said Mrs. Cooper, looking quite surprised, "I thought I had to introduce you to a stranger!"

"She knew mother," I got out at last; and then tears which for the last fortnight seemed to have been dried up at the fountain, rained down in torrents. You must remember that this was only two months after our bereavement.

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Cooper, compassionately. "Well, I will leave her with you a bit; and perhaps a talk over her troubles will do her good."

It did do me good, if only by opening a wound again which was not healing in the right way. And from that day forward Mrs. Scott's little house in Devonshire Street was my constant resort either in trouble or joy.

For when, after a while, Mrs. Cooper returned to the room, an invitation was given by Mrs. Scott, and accepted by my cousin, for all three of us to spend a day at our new friend's on the Monday following. That was to be the last day of Charley's holidays, as he was going to school on the Tuesday; but, being rather shy of strangers, as boys of fourteen generally are, I think he was not altogether pleased that he was obliged to be of the party; for he said, "What shall I do all day long?"

However, Mrs. Scott and her son Mr. William had



young people would have excused you, I know ;" adding to me, " but I am afraid that I never told you what an invalid my son is."

Then we sat down to dinner, Mr. William having his on a little table beside his couch ; for they always dined early in Devonshire Street ; and I can remember everything that we had, though it is so many years ago. There was roast-beef at the top, and a meat-pie at the bottom for Charley to carve, with some greens and potatoes, and some very good ale, that had been sent by a friend in Buckinghamshire expressly for Mr. William's benefit ; and I remember particularly admiring a very old-fashioned glass jug which stood in the middle of the table. Afterwards came a delicious damson-pie and a plum-pudding, with custards, and all of a first-rate description ; for Mrs. Scott knew as well as anybody how to give good cheer on occasion.

And then, when dinner was over, we all drew round the fire, and ate walnuts and apples ; but long ere we came to this point Mr. Scott and my brother were on the best of terms. He was always of a sociable disposition, they said, and fond of boys ; but I think that what his mother had told him of our history had greatly drawn out his sympathy towards us ; for more than once during the meal I caught his eye resting on me in a very pitying manner.

Afterwards his chair was sent for, and we all went for



a walk, as soon as his mother had seen him carefully and warmly packed in. We did not go very far, because of the cold, nor could we keep up with the men who carried the sedan; but two or three times we found it waiting for us, because Mr. William wanted to make some remark to us. It was considered good, so Mrs. Scott said, for him to go out every day for the sake of the change, even when the air was too cold to have the windows down; but she confessed that she was always nervous about it, on account of the fights which were so common among chairmen; and on that very day we saw two persons set down in order that the men might thus settle their differences, which occurrences gave rise, on our return home, to one of what we soon found to be Mr. Scott's frequent bursts of indignation against "our wretched police."

I can tell you, too, just where we walked. We went through the little passage by St. George the Martyr's Church, down Southampton Row, then across Bloomsbury Square and up Great Russell Street, past Montague House—which since then, you know, they have made into the British Museum—and after that we found our way into Oxford Street, where both Mrs. Scott and her son did some shopping.

There was an hour before tea-time, after we got back, during which Charley was left to Mr. William's care, while Mrs. Scott, Annie, and I took our work into the back

room, which was called the drawing-room. Our work was nothing to look at, being merely common garments for the poor; but that kind of work was fashionable just then; and if I had taken anything else out in a quiet way like that, I shouldn't have expected to be thought much of. Mrs. Scott had stores of materials in a little cupboard in the corner; for, like every lady who had joined in the effort, she took her share of what was provided out of the funds collected, and, as most mornings she was busy among the poor, she always had plenty of pressing cases to supply.

I thought to have had another delightful long talk about my lost ones while we were alone; but we were soon interrupted by a loud rat-tat-tat at the door; and then there was a little bustle in the passage, and a lady was ushered in. In that quiet home, and in the company of that neat, sober little widow lady, we hardly expected to see such a fashionable personage enter as the Mrs. Blanding announced by Sally, in a somewhat comical tone.

She was attired in that wide, loose gown that was called a *sacque*, which was open in the front, and confined at the waist so as to gather it in great folds over the hoop. I had never seen one before, although at Mrs. Cooper's we were accustomed to stylish company; and I should not have seen it to advantage then, as over it she wore a large warm mantle, handsomely trimmed with fur, had not the good lady immediately announced that she had

come to sit a while with her dear friend, and begged leave to throw off her wraps, the change from the outer air to our warm room being very great. If I remember rightly, my dear, this style of dress did not come in until the following spring; but Mrs. Blanding was one who was fond of getting private advice in such matters, and so forestalling the fashions. Her head-gear also struck us considerably. The face, which was handsome in itself, was heightened in tone and colour by powder and rouge; and it was encircled by little tiny curls. Indoors she wore, as I afterwards found, a little cap over all; but I am not sure if she had it on then; I only know that she had a large leghorn hat cocked on the right, and tied under her chin, a large rose being fixed on the left side.

On being introduced to us, she began in such a sprightly way to make her comments on our pale faces and sable garb, that we felt relieved when Mrs. Scott succeeded in drawing off her attention from us. Annie, however, took greatly to her little lap-dog, which brought her into favour, and procured her an invitation to visit Mrs. Blanding's house in order to see her monkey.

"Such a droll creature! my little angel! You never beheld such tricks," she said; "I declare I should die of ennui without him."

Fortunately, however, Annie was always afraid of monkeys; and she showed her feelings so unmistakably in her face, that Mrs. Scott came to her help by saying,—

"My young friends do not go out just now, dear madam. It is a peculiar circumstance alone which causes the exception in my favour."

So she got off.

After that we had to listen to a large dose of lively prattle, while Mrs. Scott quietly bided her time to drop some little word or two of wisdom.

But the good lady had an object in coming, as we discovered before long, though she seemed to find it somewhat difficult to get it out. She had been running on about first one gay scene and then another, which she had visited, concluding the list with something which seemed of the nature of a puppet-show in which the fall of man was represented, and ending by saying with a laugh,—

"But it was very naughty, very shocking! Do you not think so, my friend?"

"Indeed, I do," Mrs. Scott answered gravely; "I think it very wrong to turn such subjects into jests." And I could have clapped my hands at her candid answer.

"Ah! this is a wicked world. We are all growing worse and worse," said Mrs. Blanding, with another little laugh. "And yet what are people to do? If we are in this world, we must do as others do. How can we help it?"

"My dear Mrs. Blanding," replied Mrs. Scott, "have you forgotten those exceeding great and precious promises which are given to us in order that we may be-

come partakers of the divine nature, and *escape* the corruption that is in this world ? ”

“ Ah ! ” she said, with a little light sigh, which struck me as expressing deeper feeling than she intended it should ; “ I do not understand these things, you know ; but I seem to remember that they spoke some such words at that curious meeting to which you once took me in Fetter Lane. I wonder if I could be admitted to another like it, some day ? ”

I do not quite remember what the answer was ; but it ended by a promise from Mrs. Scott that she would certainly take her when next she went. “ However,” she added, “ there is to be a sermon preached at the Fishmongers’ Almshouses, next Sunday, by a very remarkable young man. I would advise you to go and hear him.”

This was said in the passage, as the good lady was taking her leave ; so I did not catch the name of this preacher.

Afterwards, at tea-time, I ventured to ask what kind of meeting it was to which Mrs. Blanding had referred ; and then Mrs. Scott said,—

“ My dear, it was at just such an one that I first met your dear mother,—in Fetter Lane that was, too ; for I have only an introduction to that and one other. There we first felt our hearts drawn to each other ; and during her first visit to London she came often to this house. But it was ten years ago, I suppose ; and she was well and bonny, then.”

"Mother is very fond of these little conventicles, you see, Miss Conyngham," said Mr. William, I think because he saw that this last remark had made me look sad. "And after all," he added, "I have a great notion that one might get more good at them than one usually does at church now-a-days."

"They are not intended to take the place of our regular services," his mother said quickly; and I saw her give him rather a reproving look. "Indeed, they sprang originally from the very great success of a certain good Dr. Horneck's ministry, some seventy years ago. His preaching caused a strong conviction of sin in the minds of many young men; and this feeling naturally led to their desiring to get together for social prayer and intercourse. I believe about forty such meetings went on in London at that time, and did so much good that Queen Mary and some of the bishops patronized them. But now there are only ten that I know of; and this seems to me one proof of there being much less earnestness about spiritual things than there was in those days."

"Earnestness, mother!" cried Mr. William; "why, religion has gone to sleep altogether in our times; at any rate, it is not preached about in sermons as it used to be, I suppose. It is a long time since I heard a religious sermon, I know. They are all about morals and such-like,—subjects that any of the old Roman or Greek writers would have treated better any day than our old doctors do."

"My dear boy," she answered, looking quite distressed, "I do wish that you would not use such strong language. I was not even thinking of our teachers at that moment. It was of ourselves, the laity, who form the chief part of the church after all, that I was thinking. We ourselves are not so much in earnest, I fear, as people were in King William's reign, or else these meetings, or some like them, would have spread and increased in number."

"If Mr. Whitefield takes to frequenting them, I should think they would get back their importance pretty soon," returned Mr. William. "Miss Conyngham, have you ever heard him?"

"No; I never even heard his name, that I can recollect, Mr. Scott," I said. "Is he one of those whom my cousin calls 'wild preachers'?"

"No doubt of it," replied he. "Anybody would be called wild now-a-days who roused people up, and made them listen. I never heard him, for you see I can't get about; and perhaps I might not agree with him if I did; but two years ago, when he was in London, he got such crowds at Bow Church, that you might have walked on their heads, they say, and thousands went away who could not get in. He must be something out of the common to do that, when all other churches are empty; and I like to hear of it, even though, as I say, I don't think I should agree with him; for we all want waking up, that's certain."

"And quite as certain that we needn't wait for any man to wake us," answered his mother, who saw a painful expression of interest plainly written in my little sister's face. And then she reminded us of a text in the Bible which years before had been set me as a Sunday lesson : "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light ;" about which she talked to us for some time, and drew us out to talk and to tell how in bygone days our dear parents had taught us from passages like this ; her son all the while listening, but taking no part in the conversation.

We spoke of Aunt Judith after that, and wondered how she got on among the poor giddy French people. And Mrs. Scott took occasion to point out to us the difference between their condition with no liberty of conscience, and our own with an open Bible, until she saw that she had a little counteracted the gloomy impression which her son's words had made on our young minds. You know I was only seventeen myself in those days.



## CHAPTER V.

WE were up early next morning, helping Charley to pack for school. That was another hard parting for us; for we had always made much of him, he being our only brother; and, besides, since we became orphans we had begun to regard him, young as he was, something in the light of a protector. But we knew it to be a necessary one, and good for him; so we made up our minds to it, comforting ourselves with the thoughts of the midsummer holidays.

Still, it was his first time of going quite away; and there were endless little preparations to make. After his clothes had gone into one trunk, up came another to be filled with more interesting matter, such as pieces of wood for modelling; a school cake, composed with wondrous care by Mrs. Cooper's cook; pencil and papers for the drawing of ships and maps—the latter being an idea suggested by Mr. William Scott, who on the previous evening had exhibited various of his own productions in that line; and lastly, the books, which comprised not only Charley's own possessions, but also one or two volumes

lent him by his new friend. Amongst these I remember there was one entitled "Dampier's Voyages," which was rather a new book, and one that he had only obtained by dint of hard begging, as Mr. William had hardly done with it.

At length both trunks were completed, locked, and corded; and then came the usual exhortations from the Colonel to be a good boy, and win plenty of laurels; we each took a final hug; Charley got into the coach in a very choky condition; and we fled to our own room until the luncheon bell rang.

"Well, how are the eyes, little maiden?" the Colonel said to Annie, chucking her under the chin, as we entered the dining-room for that meal. "I wonder if they would be in good case enough to look at some pictures to-day! I've a notion that there are some funny ones in a street that I know of, if you've a mind to a walk with me."

She did not at first seem to take to the idea, but continued to look very dull, until, by a good deal of fun and raillery peculiar to himself, our good-natured cousin had roused her up, and she began to ask what kind of pictures they were.

"Caricatures, my dear, and some of the best the world has ever seen," he answered, laughing at the state of puzzle into which this long word had thrown her. "And if you don't know what those are, come with me and see."

on her too; on which she said she would bring an umbrella; but he answered,—

“No, indeed; at least, if you do, I cannot come with you; for the hackney coachmen do not allow any umbrellas in the crowded streets. We should have a nice row if we tried it.”

“Not allow umbrellas!” Annie cried, opening her eyes. “We never asked coachmen what they would allow at Mayfield. What a dreadful place London must be!”

“It wants a deal of setting to rights, my girl; no doubt of that,” he replied. “When Charley is clever enough, you must get him to write us some articles on that subject in the ‘*Gentleman’s Magazine*.’”

“What, you mean some of those funny things that the gentlemen with the queer names say to each other in the debates in the Senate of Lilliput,” she said, looking archly into his face. “Ah, Colonel Cooper, I have found them out, though they do call themselves by such gibberish; at least, Charley and I did together, when you thought we couldn’t understand what you were reading about. It is all about what they say in the Houses of Parliament, where they make the laws. And why cannot they call each other by their right names?”

“Don’t you think they are wiser to keep out of scrapes, Annie?” he said.

And she looked puzzled again, and probably would

have continued to pursue her investigation on this matter, which seemed to have excited her curiosity, had not her attention been suddenly arrested by the sight of St. Paul's Cathedral, of which we just then came in view. Then she soon got interested in hearing our cousin relate how, two years before, the city had been greatly alarmed at the sight of two large birds which perched on the cross and pine-apple of the cathedral, because the people considered their appearance as an omen of some great impending calamity.

"Such a multitude assembled," he said, "on that occasion, that, as it was necessary to man the fleet quickly, the authorities caught an idea from this circumstance, and soon after placed a large turkey on the top of the monument, which drew such a crowd that the press-gang quickly picked up many idle hands."

"That served them right," said Annie. "If they were afraid of a turkey, they deserved to be taken."

So we had a nice walk that day; and the Colonel was evidently quite delighted with his own success in amusing us. He was a very kind-hearted man; and if he had not so very often made use of words which sounded to us exceedingly like breaches of the third commandment, I think we should never have been much happier than in his company. Once, when Mrs. Norris saw us look a good deal shocked at something he had said, she excused him by explaining that gentlemen who had been in the

army thought nothing of such expressions; but Charley only answered indignantly, that "it was a pity they didn't."

London is a good deal altered since we were young, and altered for the better too, I hope; for the removal of those very sign-boards and water-spouts, about which my little sister was so jealous, took away the cause, not only of much inconvenience, but of many angry words and much fighting and quarrelling.

We had to go to the extreme of the fashion that day, I remember, whether we would or not, and dine at four o'clock; for we could not get home before. Mrs. Cooper had got us a specially nice dinner, and she came to the door to welcome us back, and to inquire if we were not quite frozen; and then Mrs. Norris was sent to help us dress for dinner, in order that we might be quick, because company had come in. It consisted only of a young gentleman and his sister; and altogether we had a very sociable meal, first discoursing of what we had seen, and leaving politics alone for one evening, which was a comfort, and saved many high words. So the day of Charley's leaving us passed off better than we had expected, as many dreaded times do, my dear. "Take time by the forelock," if you will, but never sorrow. That's another lesson that I have learnt as I came along the road, though I don't always practise it as I should. Only I would advise you, Annie, not to forget the

holy maxim, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

I had had another dread about that day, too, which was never realized, and that was, lest I should be very closely questioned about all that was said and done at Mrs. Scott's on the previous one ; for I was so afraid that if I managed to keep the secret, Annie would let it out—the secret, I mean, of the Scotts being such very different people from the Coopers, and holding such different sentiments. If they only knew that, I thought we never should be allowed to visit there, at least, as freely as I hoped to do ; and already the prospect of doing so seemed the one sunbeam cast over my future life.

But, as I have said, this fear never was realized ; for other things engrossed Mrs. Cooper's thoughts for some days ; and then she was not an inquisitive person ; besides which, subsequent events have led me to the conclusion that, on the whole, she thought it wiser not to know too much about it. Indeed, I once overheard her remark to a friend, who was saying something about us,—

"You know, Colonel Cooper is under a kind of promise about those young people ; and, besides, we only have the care of them until their aunt returns from the Continent."

The promise, no doubt, was made to mother, I thought. And how she did pray to see him !

It was a little circumstance, but it made a great impression on my mind ; for just then I was trying to pray myself, and yet sometimes was tormented with doubts as to whether my prayers would be answered.

## CHAPTER VI.

It was not very long after this that I got my first letter from our dear old pastor.

The postman came pretty often to our cousin's house, sometimes as often as twice a week, for they had many friends; but until then none had come for me.

We had been fancying ourselves quite forgotten at Mayfield, Annie and I, and fretting about it a good deal, when this came to assure us that we were well remembered.

And so it healed up a very sore place in our hearts, and was, you can't think how welcome!

And yet it contained some very sad news, and we both shed many tears over it, though it was only some parts that I read to Annie.

But you would like to hear it, and any one may now, my dear: so just pass me that desk, and I will read it to you; for I have always kept it handy—that dear old letter! Only you must know that the writer was a very old man, and very old-fashioned and quaint, too, espe-



cially when he put anything down in writing. Ah! here it is.

“MY DEAR CHILD,

“Some day, I suppose, I must call you Mistress Judith; but as I can't get to that formality yet, I keep to the old name, hoping that London manners have not yet made you too proud to like it.

“Your own dear letter came duly to hand a month ago, and would have had an answer sooner, but that God hath in His wisdom seen fit to afflict our town and parish very sorely since you left us; insomuch that it hath been at times exceeding hard for one advanced in years as I am to find time and occasion for all that lay upon me. Indeed, your great and heavy affliction was but the beginning of troubles here, seeing that sickness hath visited many houses, and left widows and orphans in its train.

“Nevertheless, my child, these, as well as all other events which God's providence hath ordained, may turn to our profit if rightly used; aye, and I verily believe have already been so turned by many; as the apostle saith: ‘All things work together for good to them that love God.’

“And inasmuch as many among us have been greatly drawn to our knees during this painful season, you also, with your brother and sister, must, I am persuaded, have your share of the good things sought at the mercy-seat

either in present enjoyment, or else kept in reserve for you, seeing that at such times the orphans of your sainted parents have ever been remembered.

“Yet see to it, my young friend, that you forfeit not these benefits by your own sloth, negligence, or sin. It availeth little for others to pray for us, unless we pray for ourselves. A parent's piety will not save a child; and the good seed sown may become unfruitful. Therefore, while I hold you up in the arms of my faith, I bid you beware. Aye, beware! For you are now in the midst of that great city, whose sins go up daily in mighty clouds, crying for vengeance from on high. News hereof have but lately reached me of the way in which crime stalketh abroad, and vice walketh with unblushing face even in high places. Think not that I speak in bitterness; for in London I was born, and London hath had many of my poor prayers since the day when my tongue was first unloosed before God.

“But ye are young, and were tenderly nursed up in this our quiet town (which yet is black enough in the sight of the Holy One); and my heart misgiveth me when I think of the dangers ye are in; yea, it would altogether die within me, did I not know that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and that He bringeth His own counsel to pass, making even the wrath of men to fear Him.

“Your old house is still untenanted, and, in the opinion of many, is like to remain empty a while; for, although

the fever did not touch it, there being none left to be a prey, yet, until the infection quite leaveth our place, we may not look for new-comers. Mistress Underwood grieveth not for this, not bearing the thought of any faces to fill the places of those who are gone. When any come, we hope they may be godly folk.

"Nancy is but now recovered from the sickness. She was nigh to death with it, poor lass; but her grief after you were all departed was worse to look on than the grievous fever which followed. She sendeth her loving duty to ye all.

"Good Mistress Simmons is gone to her rest. She laboured night and day among the poor folk, until she fell ill herself; and then it made short work with her.

"Also in the squire's household two are dead, the youngest child and its nurse. There were no merry-makings last Christmas-tide, first, out of respect to your dear parents; and next, because several persons even then lay ill. The fever reached the hall about the middle of January; and every person there sickened; so that they were forced to send far and near for nurses. Nevertheless, they being but ignorant women, could not be left to their own devices; therefore Mistress Underwood and two other well-worn ladies, whom it was not like to seize, were often there, as well as in many other houses and cottages; and the shield of the Mighty was over them and over me also.

"At the present time the distemper hath well-nigh disappeared; for which we are very thankful, though it hath shorn us of many of our best and fairest ones. I put a list of the names of those who are gone at the end of this scrawl, as you will know them all.

"Jacob Butterfield thinketh that he will soon have business in London, in which case I will send by him a little book, which but lately fell into my hands. It is entitled, 'A Remedy against Satan's Devices,' to many of which, you, my child, must be now exposed.

"I pray you, remember, that though he be as a roaring lion among some, he knoweth full well how to show himself under an angel's garb, where that disguise may answer better. And, moreover, I reckon that, brought up as ye all were, it is more under that form than the other that you must look for him; though perchance the sheepskin may be his favourite dress.

"That some godly person may take ye all in hand is my earnest prayer and longing desire; but after all ye may be in a safer path than ye would have found in our quiet parish. The Lord knoweth best. It was not of your choosing, nor of your dear parents, nor of any of your friends, that ye went hence; therefore we may say that He Himself 'put you forth,' that ye may be proved and tried by somewhat of roughness in your path; for 'tis only by trying the metal that we know its worth. Yea, even a friend might spoil the discipline. I cannot tell. Only, if one

be sent, neglect not his godly counsel. Above all, grieve not the heavenly Friend who sticketh closer than a brother; and forsake not that fold into which in infancy ye were brought, to go wandering among the mountains of sin and pleasure.

"I say especially of pleasure; because 'tis likely that many kind folk, compassionating your sorrowful orphanhood, and the being so early thrust among strangers, will seek, by all sorts of gay conversation, books, company, and shows, to drown the sense of trouble.

"That is the world's way; but it is not Christ's, my child. He bindeth up the broken heart, and mollifieth the wounds thereof with ointment; but His medicines heal not hastily and slightly; rather do they act gently, and so that the sufferer enjoyeth better health afterward than he did before.

"Moreover, when our heavenly Father chastens, He would have us feel it is for our profit; and He meaneth that we should think thereon.

"No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto all that are exercised thereby.' So you see some are not exercised in it; inasmuch as it is plain to all men that trouble maketh many persons hard and sore, instead of holy, gentle, and tender-hearted, as it is meant to do. But in order that it may do the latter, let it draw you down often to your knees before the mercy.

seat where He sitteth Who can be touched with the feeling both of your infirmities and sorrows, seeing that He hath trodden the thorny path before you.

“And when up again, be not idle. Work there must be for you to do, though I cannot say do this or that, not knowing how you stand; but sure I am that the Lord of the vineyard will find you employment, if you will only take what He sends, and not be dainty about it.

“Your own little sister should be your first care; but of that it needeth not that I put you in remembrance, seeing that your mother's charge concerning her must ever be fresh in your mind. I trust she is a good child, and mindeth well her books.

“It is not wholly unknown to you that in our time young ladies think it no shame to be ignorant, trusting everything to their pretty faces, smart dresses, and too easy manners; but your mother was not one of that sort; and you know well how much your poor father desired that his daughters' minds should be well stored with sound and godly learning. Therefore, my child, be not tempted to go with the multitude in all these things. There be many tales now-a-days which, as the saying is, every one reads; yea, even those who are counted women of a modest and shame-faced demeanour; and yet be they for the most part concerning such matters as should cause them to blush, and would paint their faces with crimson,

were it not for the present low state of manners which maketh such things to be thought nothing of.

"So you see, Judith, there is no other way than to be content to be singular. Remember you cannot serve our God and the god of this world too. Therefore make your choice; only bethink you well that in that choice the little one to whom you are required to do, as far as in you lieth, a mother's part, will probably be involved.

"You perceive that I am using much candour with you, my child; but you were ever used to my plain speaking, and though maybe now you hear much of another kind, I would fain persuade myself that you have not grown tired of it.

"Tell Charles that he shall hear from me, if it pleaseth God to spare my life and health, when you have sent me word of the school where he is to get his learning.

"Annie, too, shall, under the same conditions, get a letter some day.

"Mistress Underwood joineth me in much Christian love to you all. She would write herself, but being somewhat enfeebled by her late exertions, she cannot now cause her hand to do its work steadily.

"So fare ye well.

"Your loving Undershepherd,

"SIMEON UNDERWOOD."

It was such a comfort that Mrs. Cooper was not a very inquisitive person; for it would have spoilt all if I

had had to read this letter to her; but she was very sympathising in our sorrow at hearing of the death of so many of our friends, and said she wished she could make room in her household for Nancy.

It would have been a comfort to have her! But then we knew well enough that Nancy had another home waiting for her, and that now she had left our service, Jacob Thomson would never let her put him off much longer.

And, after all, I dare say it was better as it was; because Mrs. Norris had been so kind to us from the first, and always seemed to want to be like our own maid to us; and so she would just have felt as if she were not wanted if Nancy had come; and that would have been a pity, for she always seemed so to like hearing about our old home, and what we did every day, and how we had been taught all our lives. And since those times it has sometimes come into my head that all that was new to her, and good for her, she having always lived amongst worldly people, and never had good teaching herself.

Only a little while before we came, it seems that she had heard some things which the "wild preachers" had said; indeed, it is my belief that she had heard one of them preach, though she never would confess to that, for fear it should get to her mistress's ears, and she should lose her place.

But whatever it was, something had certainly given her a



very ready ear for good things ; so that she caught up many words which we repeated unthinkingly, and would sometimes ask questions which it puzzled me to answer.

When that sort of longing springs up in the heart, we cannot always tell what has caused it,—I mean, what were the outward means. “The wind bloweth where it listeth ;” yet we cannot see the wind, nor do we know whence it comes : and just so it is with that wondrous change which I now believe was taking place in Mrs. Norris’s mind, and of which I have seen the effects in many persons during the course of my life.

That part of the letter about Annie troubled me a good deal ; though, indeed, I had been uneasy about her before. Or, perhaps, I should rather say at the little I was doing for her, and at the consciousness which I had of my own want of power to exert any influence for good over her. So far as I could judge, the child was going on very nicely ; but then, it was independently of anything that I did for her ;—so I thought. In short, I was not what my dear mother had wished me to be to her. I was not fulfilling her charge.

And yet this was not exactly from carelessness or laziness as regarded her. Rather it seemed to me that I was held down and rendered powerless by something that oppressed me. What that was I could not have told ; though I now believe it was partly the result of a certain reaction from those powerful incentives to duty which

I once had, as well as from the torpor and chill which so often succeed a time of violent excitement.

However it was, I had been uneasy ; and this letter made me, in this respect, more so. But then it made me look into myself a great deal more than I ever had done ; and that was very good for me. In fact, if I learnt nothing else, I learnt more of my own heart at this time than I had ever known before ; and that sort of learning is very useful, though by no means pleasant. For many a long day after that I often had a terrible heart-ache from the discovery then made, of the easy way in which I had been all my life taking many things for granted.

And that word of the good old minister's, that there was nothing for it but to be content to be singular, often rung in my ears. All my childhood I had been, as it were, thrown into the company of Christ's wheat ; and during that time the singularity would have been in showing myself a tare. But now things were reversed—I could see that ; and very soon the anxious thought in my heart was "Which am I?"

Oh ! yes ; it was very good for me to have been afflicted.

## CHAPTER VII.

THINGS worked round wonderfully for the bringing about of this great wish of the dear old gentleman for us,—I mean that we should find a good Christian friend.

At first it seemed to me that our cousin was a little jealous of our going often to Devonshire Street; as she naturally must have been, not agreeing with Mrs. Scott in religious matters. But when the first warm weather set in after a long frost, she felt it a good deal, and began to be so very ailing that the physicians recommended her to go to Bath, and see what the waters would do for her.

Now she was always fond of a change like that, and so was the Colonel; so this was a pleasant prescription for her. But it was evident there was some difficulty; nor was it long before I discovered that it was we who stood in the way.

Norris told us that if we could have joined in the gaieties of the place, her mistress would have liked nothing better than to carry us along with them; but that in our deep mourning that could not be thought of; in fact, in her opinion, it would be highly improper, although many

people rushed to such scenes on purpose to drown their sorrows; but, as I have said before, Mrs. Cooper had a high sense of propriety. Yet if it would be inconvenient on that account to have us with her, it seemed equally so to leave us behind; and therefore when Mrs. Scott heard of the difficulty, and stepped in with her kind invitation for us to spend the time with her, it seemed too *à propos* to admit of long hesitation.

Mrs. Cooper did say to her husband at the first moment, I believe, that she could not answer it to her conscience to expose us to the danger of being made Methodists; but he soon overruled that by reminding her that when our aunt came home we must be in that sorry plight; and so it was no manner of use trying to shield us. I suppose that convinced her; for she soon gave way, and Norris had orders to pack up our things.

So you see, my dear, that I was able actually to answer that letter under the roof of just the very person with whom our old pastor would have wished to place us if he had known her; and as I did so, I couldn't help thinking again how God does answer prayer.

But certainly all these little things had made me very curious to know more about these strange people of whom Mrs. Cooper had such a wonderful dread; so I questioned Norris pretty closely; for it was clear that she knew more about them than she chose to tell. She made me a long, round-about, and somewhat evasive answer, but ended at

last by saying, that as far as she could see, many of them were very good church people,—which was a relief to my mind; for I had always been brought up in love and reverence of our own old Church of England, and liked any one all the better for belonging to it.

It was two or three days before our cousins were ready to start. Most of their acquaintances would have taken a fortnight to prepare; but then he was an old soldier, and she a person who knew how to get through business without much fuss; so things were quickly settled. And in the meantime news came of the arrival of a fine India-man at Blackwall, bringing a very valuable cargo from the Indies and from China. So nothing would do but Mrs. Cooper must go down to see it in order to get a good choice of her favourite old china. Indeed, it was seldom that she let such an opportunity slip; and this time she said that she particularly wanted to procure presents for her Bath friends; besides that, it was a good opportunity to give us a treat.

It was a treat, certainly, being the first time we had seen such a vessel; only our pocket-money would not enable us to buy half the beautiful things that we wanted. With a little help, however, from Mrs. Cooper, Annie managed to secure a pair of lovely little birds for her young friend Sophy; and I found myself rich enough to purchase a fan of curious workmanship to carry to Mrs. Scott, and something, I forget what, for Charley.

When we got home to dinner, the Colonel began bantering and teasing Annie, as he loved to do, and protesting that he also had been somewhere to see pretty things; only he wouldn't tell her where. I can remember even now how he worked on her curiosity, and how vexed she was because she could not find out. It seems odd that such little things should make such an impression; but they do sometimes.

However, the mystery was soon cleared up; for before we had been two hours at Mrs. Scott's, there came a loud single rap at the door, and two men lifted something into the hall, while Sally handed in a note to Mr. William.

This was to explain "that the accompanying package was just a little trifle, picked up at a sale (though warranted to be only six months old), and of which the Colonel begged his young friend's acceptance, as it had occurred to him as likely to be handy for an invalid."

It proved to be a little table, made of that beautiful Spanish wood called mahogany, which had lately been introduced, and come much into fashion. It has now become, of course, tolerably common; but as this was the first piece of furniture made of that wood which had come into the house, and Mr. William had a great liking for all new discoveries or inventions, he was greatly pleased. Mrs. Scott, too, thought it quite lovely.

Annie and I soon fell into the ways of the household; for, indeed, they seemed very homelike ways to us.

We helped Mrs. Scott with her needlework, and in making her puddings and pies; and most mornings we went with her to visit some poor people. For, as she said, she had fewer family ties than most ladies, she could therefore spend a good deal of time in that way; and sorely the poor creatures needed her; for they were little enough looked after round us.

Ah! it was something like being once more with our mother or Mrs. Underwood as we listened to her way of talking to them; and somehow or other the words came to me with a force and a meaning which they never had before. Often have I walked back by her side, silent and sad, sometimes almost sick at heart, as I remembered how often such teachings had floated by me, just like the pleasant songs which sweet singers sing, and made no deeper impression.

At such times it was that I had the worst heart-aches for the days that could never, never return.

Poor Mr. William suffered a great deal from weakness and ill health; yet he continued to study wonderfully, and liked to be left alone to read in the mornings. His mother, who doated on him, used to call him a regular book-worm.

At that time I had never seen so many books anywhere else, except at the parsonage at Mayfield; and they were mostly old ones, which the vicar had gradually collected during his long life. We thought that our father had a

good many, and generally we had one in regular reading out of the library ; but then, in our house, a new book was a special treat, notwithstanding that our family was regarded by the neighbours as remarkably studious. But Mr. William used to get every new book that came out, if it was in any way remarkable. It seemed to be his nature to want to know what every one was thinking about—that is, every *thinking* person ; and some of these books he would lend to us or read to us, but not all. For instance, I recollect asking for the loan of a tale called “Pamela,” which came out that year ; but he looked surprised, and remarked that he thought he had heard me say that my old friend at Mayfield objected to such light reading.

“Yes,” I said ; “but people say this is so different from other novels, and quite innocent.”

“Quite innocent !” he repeated. “Well, of course, it is all very well for men, and an improvement on the old style ; but for young ladies—no, according to my thinking.”

Of course I said no more, though I wondered ; as I knew that all my young acquaintances had read it, and that Mrs. Cooper had pronounced it a book that might be given to any child.

Some time after that I was introduced to Mr. Richardson, the author, and thought him a very pleasant, sociable sort of man. He was said to be very religious by his



friends ; but Mr. William told me that he was not one of his mother's sort ; and I knew he meant a good deal by that, though he used at that time to declare that he couldn't understand her creed.

I think it was having heard Mr. Richardson's history that interested me about him. It seemed so wonderful that he should be born the son of a common joiner, and yet work his way up to such distinction. But the most curious point was his not finding out that he could write until he was past fifty. And then I liked the idea of his reading everything, as he went along, to his wife and her sister, instead of shutting himself up in his shell to write, as so many authors do. However, it never would have been my lot to meet with him, but that Mr. William had always such a fancy for knowing the authors as well as the books, that he used to contrive all sorts of ways for getting them to his house, or for meeting them elsewhere ; for now and then he was able to be carried in his sedan to some friend's house, where he could take things quietly and feel at home.

So we often used to meet with rather distinguished people while we were in that little house in Devonshire Street, which he always called the dullerest in the dullerest street in London. But that was only by way of making out that every one who came to visit him in it was particularly good-natured ; for he was anything but a grumbling sort of person.

Somehow or other he had got into Mr. Pope's company more than once, and often spoke of him; and I have a dim idea of having seen him too; though I can't say when or where. He was an elderly man then, and very famous. Indeed, he had become famous very early in life. They say it was the reading of Homer's poems which first brought out his poetical genius; and, considering that he was a Papist, and therefore laboured under considerable disadvantages, it seems very surprising that he was thought so much of. But, though I call him a Papist, he was only one nominally, and because he happened to be born of Popish parents; for you know it was he who wrote those lines—

“He can't be wrong whose life is in the right;”

and that prayer which begins—

“Father of all ! in every age,  
In every clime, adored  
By saint, by savage, or by sage,  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.”

How strange it seems that any calling themselves Christians could approve of such sentiments ! Ah, but those were just the notions of those times; for I suppose religious faith was then as nearly dead as it ever has been. Yet many who did so were those who called themselves Churchmen, in spite of that eighteenth Article of ours, which says, “They also are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect

which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved."

What sort of lives did men generally lead in those days? Well, I don't think that many of them were in the right. So it would appear as if that sort of easy-going creed, or faith, or religion, or—what shall I call it?—scarcely answers.

But I remember a discussion which took place one day on these very lines of Mr. Pope's, in Mrs. Scott's absence. She would soon have cut it short had she been present; for, notwithstanding her quiet nature, she could be positive enough when she chose, and didn't like such notions talked about lightly. However, she had been called out to see a sick friend, and meantime several visitors had dropped in. First came Mrs. Blanding, who was running on in her usual would-be gay strain about all sorts of nonsensical subjects, when two gentlemen were introduced.

They were fashionable young men, yet by no means so devoid of brains and sense as most of these are. The one was dressed in a claret suit, and the other in a light-blue, both having silver buckles and button-holes to the knee, and carrying great oak sticks, with huge ugly heads carved on them for handles, instead of swords.

Mrs. Blanding and they seemed to be previously acquainted ; for they immediately began twitting her with her changes of politics, judging by the patches which she wore on her face, which, they said, had shifted from the Tory to the Whig side, and back again, already three times in the last six months. Then they proceeded to discuss plays, operas, and cards for a while, until, perceiving that neither Mr. William nor I took any part in the conversation, they turned to other subjects, all three joining in abusing the king for being so often absent in Germany, and in calling Hanover by the then common phrase, "a millstone hung round the neck of England, in order to sink her prosperity;" and so passed on to literature, with the current kinds of which they showed some acquaintance, as it seemed to me ; but, of course, I was no great judge. So, very naturally, Mr. Pope came up ; and I remember being asked for my opinion of him ; a question which made me exceedingly nervous, as they seemed to consider that I must know all about his writings, and that I must be very ignorant if I didn't ; whereas I had read but very little of them, and moreover was not used to offer any views on such matters, especially in that hasty, positive way which they seemed to affect.

Mr. William saw my confusion at once, and, with his usual good-nature, contrived, by a variety of adroit turns and manœuvres, to save me the trouble of answering at all.

They talked a good while, and though, of course, most of what they said has passed out of my mind, I remember that they all grew rather warm, and that the gentleman in the claret suit insisted upon it, that no other rule than the poet's could ever stand the test of history or common sense, and asked who had any right to condemn such men as Confucius or Socrates, Cyrus or Lycurgus, whose lives he protested were far nobler ones than most Christians whom he knew.

"That might easily be," was Mr. William's scornful reply; for he "didn't suppose he knew many worthy of the name."

In fact, there seemed some danger of higher words than would be pleasant, when the other gentleman—the one in blue, I mean, who seemed to have no very particular opinion on the matter—seemed to be caught by the earnest expression of my young sister's face, and turning to her, said, somewhat quizzically, "And may I ask what this little lady thinks?"

"I can't see how anybody can *think* anything," answered Annie, boldly, and yet reddening as she spoke. "Jesus Christ never told people that they might believe what they chose. He said they *must* believe in Him, and that was why they killed Him: wasn't it? And didn't St. Paul tell the heathen people that they *must* turn from their dumb idols to serve the living God?"

A shocking oath was the claret gentleman's bitter

reply, and he added, "The child has been taught to believe that old book; has she? More shame for her teachers!"

"Sir," said Mr. William, "we all believe in that old book here; and therefore, as you profess such liberal doctrines, allow me to request that you will not insult our creed."

I had never before heard him speak so sternly; nor perhaps had they; for they very soon took their leave. And after that they were gone, Mr. William seemed to feel it necessary to apologize to me for having allowed such a conversation to take place before a child like Annie, though I didn't see how he could have helped it, and told him so.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Mrs. BLANDING did not leave when the young men went, but waited on for Mrs. Scott's return; and then she went up with her into her room for a gossip.

Mr. William always found this poor lady a great diversion, and used to call her "that singular fine moth," or "that sweet pretty parrot," whenever he spoke of her; and from the first I felt a strong dislike to her, and, I am afraid, a strong contempt too.

But good Mrs. Scott, who despised nobody, never showed any dislike to her, or impatience about her frequent visits. Indeed, in spite of all her silliness, she really seemed very much interested in her, and was always ready to indulge her with as many of these private conferences as she desired.

There never was any one less like a Pharisee than Mrs. Scott. I've known many good people who practically seemed to say to others, "Stand by; for I am holier than thou;" but never once can I remember her acting so.

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It appears as if she were always thinking of the saying of the good old martyr, when he saw a criminal pass on his way to Tyburn, "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford." And few knew her who did not soon discover it to be her heart's desire for themselves that they should learn to cry in earnest for that grace which is so free to all who ask it.

It was just time for Annie to go back to school; so when the two ladies had left the room, I got out my work; and Mr. William resumed his book, in which for a few minutes he appeared to be absorbed. But he soon laid it down again, and observed to me,—

"That is a sharp little sister of yours, Miss Conyng-ham, and a thinking child, too. Was your old minister a Methodist?"

"Not that I know of," I answered. "Indeed, I never heard the word until I came to London. But I know he was a very good Churchman."

"The Methodists are all Churchmen," he said; and then he told me how, only a few years before, a little band of students at Oxford had determined not to waste their lives, or spend them in the irreligious way which their companions did; but to devote them to the service of God. And so, for their own religious advantage, and in order to do the more good, they had arranged a kind of method in which they would spend their days. Thus they got the name of Methodists.



It was rather a monkish rule that they imposed on themselves at first,—praying, fasting, meditating, or examining themselves most strictly on certain days and hours; but a good deal of that, he thought, they had given up now that they had got so hard to work, and, as some say, see things in a more proper way. Mr. John Wesley was the oldest among them, and had all along been their leader; but his brother Charles, Mr. Whitefield, a Mr. Ingham, and others, had become noted preachers; and many persons thought Mr. Whitefield the greatest among them all as a preacher. But what interested me most of all, was to hear that Mrs. Scott had a great notion that our own Aunt Judith could just remember being taken in her childhood to the house of the maternal grandfather of this same famous Mr. John Wesley, and that she had actually been named after one of the daughters.

That piece of information made me ask innumerable questions about these extraordinary people, until Mr. William laughed at my curiosity. His mother went entirely with them, he said; she was heart and soul one of them; but as for himself, he was only a looker-on so far, though certainly rather an admiring spectator; because “they believe what they say; nobody can doubt that,” he said; “which is more than the most charitable person could give the greater part of our parsons credit for.”

It seemed to me that, notwithstanding, that was a very

uncharitable statement ; and I could not help saying so ; but he declared it was because I had only seen a very extraordinary specimen that I thought so, and then proceeded to tell me how these great preachers had been shut out of most churches already, and forced to preach in churchyards or anywhere they could, or else be silent. " Now, if the rectors and vicars had cared about the welfare of their people, as they said they did, would they exclude the very men who *can* get the people to church ? " he asked. And I remember answering that perhaps it was " because they didn't hold the same views."

" Views !" he exclaimed, vehemently. " I wonder what the parsons know about views now-a-days, unless it be views about hunting and shooting, or perhaps swearing and gambling !"

I was quite horrified, and could only exclaim, " Oh ! Mr. Scott, I thought you were a good Churchman."

" So I am," he said ; " I'm not setting up the Dissenters against the Church. There are a few good ones, like Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge, just as there are a few good Mr. Underwoods, about the country ; but the most of them have gone to sleep, like our parsons, and they don't take to the enthusiastic style of my mother's good friends, any better than our clergy do."

" Then what is to become of us all ? Is Christianity going to die out of the country after all ? " I asked ; and I remember feeling a terrible sort of wretchedness come

over me, as if I were about to lose the most precious thing which I had.

"We will ask my mother about that," he said, as he heard her coming; and then noticing how pale I looked; he seemed troubled that he had so upset me, and began explaining the cause of my discomposure to Mrs. Scott, as she re-entered the room, reproaching himself all the while for his impetuosity.

"Oh! fear not, my child," she said kindly to me, as she patted my cheek; "greater is He that is for us than he that is against us. Remember the words of Christ, 'Lo, I am with you *always*, even to the end of the world.' The times are dark, it is true; but there are streaks of light for all that, and oftentimes the darkest part of the night is that which precedes the dawn. But, after all, what we have got to do is to see to our own grounds of faith. In any times, but especially in dark ones, we must seek to be so grounded and settled on the Rock, that no storm of doubts, nor any number of fallers away, can shake our trust. It is when that is the case," she continued, "that we can look around us in stormy times without feeling either despair or bitterness. We must expect times of change and of gloom, if not of persecution, because our Lord forewarned us of these; but none can despair of the ultimate triumph of Christianity who know that its founder is the Lord Jehovah, King of kings, and Lord of lords."

I am giving you the words of these conversations, Annie, as nearly as I can remember them at this distance of time, and I don't think that I alter many, for they made a great impression on me. Yet, notwithstanding my kind friend's encouragement, I went about for a long time with a miserable load at my heart.

You see that, as I said before, while I lived in the midst of light and love and faith, in my old home, I could not realize what people meant when they spoke of dark times ; but ever since we came to London the picture had been unrolling itself before my eyes. At Colonel Cooper's, in one way or another, tales of immorality and vice, such as I had never dreamt of, were constantly reaching my ears ; for people seemed to think nothing of repeating them ; and I often shuddered that little Annie should hear such things. Moreover, notwithstanding my cousins' respect for the outward forms of religion, the conversation of some of their visitors, and the opinions which they put forth under the sanction of very high names, but too entirely agreed with what Mr. William had asserted.

And when a general state of irreligion and doubt prevails, Satan knows very well how to make use of it, and thereby to shake the faith of individuals, especially of young Christians. " Why should you know better than all the world ? " he whispers ; " perhaps you have been living in a dream all this time ; and Christianity, though a pleasant one, may prove a myth after all."

If so, then we may live as we list, and take our fill of pleasure, some would comfort themselves by thinking; but, thank God,—and oh, I never can thank Him enough for it,—that was not my feeling. It was rather to me the fearful suggestion that every one whom I had loved might have been resting on a broken reed, and that everything which had given value and hope to life might possibly prove an illusion.

Ah! my dear, what is the loss of our best beloved compared with such a loss as that would be? There are trials, you see, of which the world has not the slightest idea; and I was sad then indeed!

And yet, how cold I had often felt when these same most precious truths had been set forth in my hearing!

Truly the mind of either man or woman is a great puzzle.

But I must go on with my story.

That was a very warm afternoon; and when Mr. William's sedan chair came as usual, we four all went together through Queen Square into the Highgate Fields, which were just then clad in the sweet tender green of early spring, many blossoms covering the trees, while daisies and buttercups besprinkled the ground; and here and there a few primroses and anemones began to appear.

Mrs. Blanding was unusually quiet and pensive; and I also felt exactly the reverse of what the scenes of nature

suggested that I ought to feel; just as I have done in several later springs, when these same scenes of nature contrasted powerfully and vividly either with my own state of mind, or with my circumstances.

But Mr. William was evidently exhilarated, and seemed full of conversation, while his mother's countenance looked like a mirror of the prospect before her, so peaceful it was, and so filled with the assurance of coming life and beauty. I remember that she said many sweet and pleasant things about the resurrection, of which every spring season is so fit an emblem, and that spring was in particular, coming as it did after a time when for weeks all nature had seemed utterly dead. And the bright assurance with which she anticipated the certain coming of that most joyful time when we shall again meet with our dear ones, and when, for Christ's own people, sin and death, and doubt and gloom will be passed for ever, at length, seemed in some measure to communicate itself to my own spirit.

I had no thought then for Mrs. Blanding, and quite forgot to wonder why she did not put in some of her foolish remarks; only once, happening to look at her, it occurred to me that her eyes were very red, and that even then there sparkled something very like a tear in them.

She came back to tea with us; and during the meal there was some talk of going to one of the private societies of which I have spoken before; and to my great joy

I was invited. The meeting was to be on the next evening; and while we were discussing the matter, I noticed that Annie and Mr. William were whispering apart. Very soon they seemed to come to an agreement; and then Mr. William spoke out, and declared his intention of going too.

His mother looked much surprised; but a flush of unmistakable pleasure came over her face as she asked if it would not be too much for him.

He was determined to try, he said; for he wanted to see what they were like; and stroking Annie's curls, he added,—

“And this young lady wants to go too, and to take her friend with her. How shall we manage, mother? They must not be disappointed, you know.”

Of course not; nobody ever was disappointed for whom her son put in a word, if dear Mrs. Scott could help it. So she thought a moment, and then said she would call on the children's governess, and get leave for Sophy to spend that evening with them, and sleep the night also, as the little girls must be taken to the house in Fetter Lane before us, and she must beg a bed for them at a friend's house near, because the hackney-coach would not hold all, and there was no other way of getting them home before morning. For, you know, my dear niece, there were then only a thousand oil lamps in all London; and the streets were not safe after dark. They have been

much better lighted of late years; but still there is room for improvement.

Well, we all went to the prayer-meeting; and Mr. William got a nice easy-chair and snug corner to himself, so that I don't think he was over-tired. He paid great attention all the time, and seemed to be weighing every word to see whether he could agree to it; and his mother watched him more than he guessed.

Mrs. Blanding sat by her at the time, and listened a good deal; but at first she could not understand that all she had to do was to keep quiet. When we first entered, the lady of the house came forward to see that we were seated, and to shake hands; and then I thought Mrs. Blanding would never finish saying polite things, and fussing and curtseying. Afterwards there came in two ladies whom she had met somewhere before; and in a moment she was up again, making her deep fashionable curtseys, just as she was used to do in church.

Yet all the while we saw that she could scarcely restrain her merriment at the plain dresses worn by most of those present, and kept trying to draw my attention to the appearance of first one and then another who struck her as more singular than the rest. Only two or three times, when one old man was speaking very earnestly on a passage of Scripture which he had read, her eyes were riveted on him, and for the time she appeared to forget everything else.



There was no remarkable person present that day, nor can I recall anything that was said. You see, I had been used to that sort of teaching all my life, so that there was nothing startling in it to me. Only it was very nice to be once more in an assembly where people evidently meant what they said, and all seemed so earnest and hungry for the Word of Life. And, besides, there was a kind of brotherly feeling amongst the members that struck even the children; so that, after it was over, little Sophia, who had been looking the very picture of a happy child all the while, came up to my side, and, putting her hand into mine, said,—

“Oh, Miss Conyngham, wasn't it nice being there? It seemed just as if we had got among the disciples when they came together to hear what God had been doing by the apostles; and then everybody looked as if they cared so much just for the same thing. Didn't you like it?”

That I did; only I was a little disappointed because Mr. Whitefield was not there; but he was then, just as you know he always has been, like the apostle Paul, “in journeying oft,” and at that moment I suppose he was on board ship, and nearing the coast of America.

Nevertheless, my curiosity about him was somewhat satisfied that night; for, being sent to sleep with the children at the house of Mrs. Scott's friend in Fleet Street, I there formed the acquaintance of one of the

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daughters, who knew a great deal about him, and told me that she owed more than she could tell to him.

I had never been in a house like that before, nor known such a family. At this moment I do not remember what their business was, but I know that it was a large concern, and that they were very substantial people, and lived in more than comfort over the business premises. Indeed, the house was not only substantially, but elegantly furnished; and I have heard that they were accustomed to entertain somewhat distinguished guests. I suppose our squire at Mayfield would have been scandalized to see me there; nevertheless there were few of the inhabitants of our old neighbourhood possessed of such cultivated and refined manners, and certainly none of such literary tastes, as this Prescott family. But Mrs. Prescott and this one daughter, Fanny, were the only ones who in the least sympathised with this wonderful religious movement, of which Mr. Whitefield and the Wesleys were the first instruments, and of which you will hear more as my tale goes on.

Fanny and I lay awake until three o'clock in the morning, talking about it; and she told me that she was just a giddy, careless girl when, while on a visit to some friends at Bristol, she first met with Mr. Whitefield. It was very soon after his ordination; for he began to make a stir at once; and after preaching in his native city, Gloucester, where his mother kept an inn (though

many of his ancestors had been clergymen), he came there.

She told me a good deal about his sermons; but the doctrine didn't seem new to me, any more than what I had heard at the prayer-meeting had done; and I wondered why he should draw such crowds, until she explained that neither she nor any of her friends had ever heard such words before.

In fact, in Bristol, as in most other places, religion had gone out of fashion altogether, and, as Bishop Butler says, "It had come to be taken for granted that Christianity was no longer a subject of inquiry, but that it was now at length discovered to be fictitious; . . . so that nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject for mirth and ridicule." That was probably because people really so very seldom heard the real thing. Moral teaching was put in its place; and that never yet had power to move a human heart.

But when Mr. Whitefield opened his mouth, it was to tell these people that gospel "which is the power of God to every one that believeth." And many did believe; nobody can deny that.

Fanny told me of his wonderful voice and mighty eloquence, and more still about his extraordinary zeal and his abundant labours for Christ; and as I listened I wanted more than ever to hear him myself. For, she told me how he used to preach day after day at Bristol,

and have the very churches that used to be so empty, crammed with hearers; and how, in a wonderfully short space of time, the whole city seemed to be thrown into a state of alarm, like Nineveh when Jonah preached there.

There was an end for that time of *laughing* at Christianity; for those who opposed then, like those who believed, grew to be more in earnest, and took to downright persecution; and I think even that was better than the quiet scorn and mockery which had been the fashion so long.

But Mr. Whitefield's old college friends, the Wesleys, were now in Georgia; and, just in the midst of this great usefulness in the West of England, there came letters from them, begging him to join them. These letters caused him to go to London to settle about going away; and so Fanny often heard him again after she got home.

He preached wherever he could get admitted into the churches; and Fanny declared that it seemed to her just like hearing St. Paul raised to life again when she was listening to him, and that she was sure he was just as truly called and sent by God as St. Paul had been; for that signs followed every sermon—not those signs which we call miracles, of course, but the greatest sign of all, which is the turning of dead sinners into living saints.

Then he went away to Georgia, and worked there as he had done in England; but you must know that all this time he didn't preach extempore.

It was when he came back to England for priest's orders, and began attending this very society which we had been at, and others like it, that he took to that; and very soon afterwards, in consequence of most of the churches being shut against him, he began his wonderful open-air services.

But this very opposition, no doubt, helped to bring him into notice; and when it was announced that on the next Sunday he would preach in Moorfields, all London rang with the news, and an immense multitude assembled to hear him. And such a multitude it was, too! For just as publicans and sinners had flocked to listen to his Master, so now the upturned sea of faces which listened, perhaps many of them for the very first time in their lives, to the good news proclaimed by Mr. Whitefield, was composed largely of the rougher sort; aye, of men accustomed to the commission of every kind of wickedness, and who would shrink from no crime which would serve their purpose. Moorfields, you know, has long been the common haunt of such kinds of folk; so when this bold and zealous champion of truth got out of his coach and entered the crowd, it was very naturally prophesied that he would never come out alive.

Fanny Prescott said she trembled as she saw him go in; for she was taken there in a coach by some of her friends, though, like most of the respectable sort, she was only on the edge of the crowd.

But God protected him, and moved the hearts of the rabble to do him no harm ; so that, instead of that, they formed a lane to let him pass up to the table which had been placed in the centre ready for him. That, however, had been crushed already by the pressure of the crowd ; so he was conducted to the wall which divides the Upper and Lower Fields, and from that he preached amid great silence to the throng before him, his wonderful voice being carried by the wind to the very extremity of the living mass.

One might have thought such an exertion and excitement enough for one day ; but instead of resting, he went off to church to hear a sermon preached against himself and his friends ; and then at five o'clock he addressed more than twenty thousand people on Kennington Common.

Oh, that talk with Fanny Prescott did me so much good ! It helped to clear away that dreadful doubt which Satan had been whispering of late into my mind, and which had seemed to take all joy out of me,—the doubt, I mean, whether, as so many people had given up the truth of Christianity, I might not be forced to give it up myself, and all its blessed hopes, too, before very long. Not that this feeling went quite away all at once ; for it seemed to come and go according to the company I was in ; only every time I thought of Mr. Whitefield, it seemed so clear that God's work is a real thing ; for no one in his senses could imagine that anything but a

supernatural influence and energy could have enabled him to do the mighty works which he accomplished, or cause his preaching to leave such lasting effects on so many thousands of people.

And yet I have heard him held up as an example of what *any* man could accomplish if only he be in earnest ! How could any one think so ? It just seemed to me, not only a very unkind comparison, but a very senseless one ; a sort of thing that people would not say if they were talking of any common matters.

For, who ever yet was bold enough to suppose that, because Sir Isaac Newton made great discoveries about light and the power of gravity, therefore any one who had tried might have done the same ; or that because the Duke of Marlborough gained wonderful victories, and broke the power of France, so every general might do as great things if he were only to do his duty ?

Oh, no ; it is the mighty power of God that has been shown in Mr. Whitefield, both bodily and spiritually ; and not in him only ; for the Wesleys, and some of their companions, have done great things for the Lord Jesus, which also have tended to magnify His name.

They are extraordinary men, raised up to do extraordinary work in extraordinarily dark and wicked days ; and that any one may see who does not wilfully shut his eyes.

## CHAPTER IX.

It was during our stay in Devonshire Street that the postman brought me one morning two somewhat thick letters. Since Charley went to school we had got used to having one every week ; for he wrote by turns to Annie and me.

But by this time these had come to be like most schoolboys' letters, all very much alike ; and they seldom contained anything of interest, though they might have done if he had written of what lay uppermost in his heart. That, however, he thought proper to keep to himself ; so that we never got even a hint of it until it was all settled, and it was useless for us to object. I shall come to that by-and-by. I need only tell you that Charley's letters were even then looked upon very much as the little notes from neighbouring friends used to be at Mayfield ; while these two were real letters, and each filled several large pages.

I opened the thinnest first, and found that it came from Mrs. Cooper, and was made up, first, of kind in-



quiries after ourselves and our welfare, and, next, of very amusing details about the mode of life at Bath. You wouldn't care to hear that one ; but it made us laugh very much ; for our cousin was a clever woman, and wrote just as she talked, in a remarkably lively, witty style, without any of those formal, stilted phrases with which most people fill their letters.

I remember she told me that she was sure I should like to be there, because Beau Nash—who reigned as a sort of king in the fashionable society of Bath, and, indeed, went by the name of King Nash—entirely prohibited any discussion about politics, of which she knew well enough that I used to get very tired when the gentlemen talked long over dinner in Queen Square. It was a good rule, certainly ; for in those days party factions ran very high ; and sometimes these said gentlemen almost came to blows.

But it was about the other letter that I want to tell you.

I had not, inexperienced young thing as I was, noticed the foreign post-mark ; and not until I broke the seal and looked to the signature did I perceive that it came from dear Aunt Judith. But when I saw that, I uttered such a scream of joy that Mr. William got off the sofa, and opened the folding doors to see what was the matter ; for it was in that little back-parlour that I read the letter ; and its perusal occupied all the rest of the morning.

It was written from Berlin, where she and her young companion were then staying ; but most of the contents were taken up with an account of what she had seen in France, where they had passed several months ; and, oh dear, when I read of the condition of the French nation, I learnt to value my own liberty and the religious privileges which I enjoyed far more than I had done before. Our times in England appeared very *light* ones then, compared with those in France.

Our cousin was abroad, partly on account of his health, and partly in order to acquire knowledge which might be useful to him as a merchant ; and as soon as his health was in some measure re-established, and he himself settled in some good mercantile house, either in Holland or Germany, she meant to return, and carry us down to live with her at her place in Yorkshire. Only Aunt Judith feared that it would be some months ere she could do this ; and meantime she was anxious about us, and would fain have had power, she said, to be in two places at once. Indeed, her letter was so full of loving words and counsels, that we felt that with her we should enjoy again something very like a mother's love ; and that was a very pleasant feeling ; for, in spite of all Mrs. Cooper's kindness, we could not look upon her in that light the least bit in the world.

So, you see, our heavenly Father was not unmindful of us. Oh, no ; the widow did not in vain leave her father-

conformity, and requires absolute proofs of the sincerity of those who apply for the sacraments of the Church. But, happily, there are times when this edict is not strictly enforced.

“And, notwithstanding our poor peasant friend’s lamentation, I know that God has not forsaken this corner of His vineyard ; for amid the bitterest woes those words are still true, ‘ Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.’

“Antoine’s gifts, his undoubted mission, and, above all, his continued preservation through such constant dangers, is proof enough of this, without any other.

“But the devil has another way of making war against God’s truth in that poor land now, besides the way of persecution. He has whispered into the minds of many that all these persecutions and controversies are only strifes about things that have no existence—that there is no God to worship at all, or in any way particular, or that, if there be a God, He is one with whom we have little to do, and who cares not for our prayers.

“That great writer, Voltaire—of whom you must have heard, for he has visited England, and is very famed—is a Deist ; and many read and admire his doubts and denials who will not suffer any Protestant doubts as to the Church’s power. I should not wonder if this nation of persecutors turns into a nation of infidels after a time ; and they tell me that Voltaire is even now in favour

with many at court. Ah, and Frederic the Great of Prussia, in whose dominions we are staying, admires him too. He calls himself a Protestant; but he is much more like an infidel, they say, though Protestantism is in favour here, such as it is; but, alas! it is not as in the great Luther's days; and, indeed, everywhere, as it seems to me, God's people need now-a-days to cry mightily to the Lord that He will graciously cause His Spirit to breathe over His Church such a breath as shall put that new life into her of which she stands so sorely in need."

You see, Annie, it was a melancholy letter in many ways, this one of our good aunt's; but she ended in a brighter strain, speaking longingly of getting back to her own Yorkshire home, and of the joy she would feel when she could take us to it as her own dear children.

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## CHAPTER X.

WELL, I must get on with my story, though somehow I always feel inclined to linger over those early days.

It was quite summer-time when Colonel and Mrs. Cooper returned, and we had to go back to Queen Square. And then, in spite of all the company that were constantly coming and going, and in spite, too, of all Mrs. Cooper's energy and liveliness, our every-day life there seemed strangely flat and dull compared with what it had been at Mrs. Scott's. Indeed, now again, as on first coming to London, and much more heavily than then, I began to know that weary feeling of having nothing particular to live for, except to enjoy myself and make myself as comfortable as I could every day. It used to come on me like a heavy load as soon as I awoke each morning; and if you don't know what it is, I can tell you that there is nothing much more trying and distressing than that sort of consciousness that all the world would go on just as well without you as with you, and that you seem to have no particular work to do in it but what might just as well

be left undone. Ah! Annie, I see you stare; you are thinking that no one has any business to feel like that, because every one must have a work to do.

That is true enough; and some indistinct feelings of that kind used often to cause all sorts of questionings within my young mind; but I can't remember that there ever came to them any very definite answer.

Even now, looking back on that time from the top of all this hill of experience which I have gained, I find it hard to apportion to myself the blame and the excuses. Seasons like this come probably in the lives of most Christians, to humble them and to try them. They are like seasons spent in a wilderness, and meant no doubt to be lonely ones. We cannot always tell what they have taught us, even when they are passed; and yet I really think that they have a very powerful effect on our after lives. But one thing certainly we discover from them; and that is that there are times when we may not even look for human sympathy. People can feel for you when you are sick, or in want, or under bereavement; but in such seasons as these very few, if any, can sympathise. The probability is that you will be generally blamed. In after years, perhaps, you will blame yourself, and possibly in some respects more than at the time you deserved, because you will be looking at things then from a different stand-point.

Yes; we should all make very unfair and unjust judges,

not only of others, but of ourselves, passing over innumerable sins, and seeing others where they did not exist. It is a happy thing for us that we are in the hands of One Who can never err, and never *forget*.

You don't understand me, I see, my dear. Well, I will give you an illustration of what I mean.

My daily complaint was, as I said before, that I had nothing to do; or, at least, nothing to what I could have done, were more set before me.

This feeling made me, I fear, seem less amiable than I used to do, and more gloomy. Mrs. Cooper had reckoned on my having in some measure regained my spirits, from the lapse of time during her absence; and very naturally, for God has so ordered it that in youth and health grief does not long abide with us.

She therefore attributed my gloominess to the religious influences under which I had lately been placed, became more than ever prejudiced against pious people, and grew less patient and gentle towards me.

This added to my trouble. And as I could not explain that I bitterly missed the religious privileges and sympathy which I had lately enjoyed, as well as the exhilarating effect of the sight of good Mrs. Scott's earnest daily life, and the happiness of sharing in the very real work which she always found to do, there seemed no remedy.

And yet all the while there were several giddy girls always coming in my way, to whom I might have tried to

do some good. That may have been the work given me to do; and sometimes I think it was, and bitterly regret that I so neglected it. These young ladies were very good-natured, and pitied me for my low spirits. Indeed, I believe that my cousin had asked them to see what they could do towards drawing me out and cheering me up. So they often came to see me, and tried to get me to go hither and thither with them, or would sit by the hour together, chatting away in the usual gay and light strain of fashionable young girls.

I shrank—as I could not but do—from all their raillery and gossip, to say nothing of much that was worse still in their conversation; and I could not but see how utterly uncultivated were their minds; while I remembered too how carefully we had, during all my childhood, been shielded from such companionship. So, instead of pondering how I could do them good, or reflecting on the difference between seeking after worldly society, and working for Christ in it when it is thrust upon you, I simply and unhesitatingly fell into such a reserved and coldly civil manner as soon caused these girls to cease their attentions. And when they left off coming about me, I secretly congratulated myself on having got rid of them.

But, oh, what an opportunity for doing good was thus lost!

Mrs. Scott would never have acted so; and even now

I can recall occasional prickings of conscience when the remembrance of her conduct towards Mrs. Blanding came across me.

But then I was not Mrs. Scott, with her lowly, but firm and undoubting grasp of the Saviour's strength, and happy consciousness that she was His, and that He was hers. I was only young Judith Conyngham, whose mind was all uneasy and unquiet about many things; who could not yet say whose she was, or to whom she belonged; and whose heart was often like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.

We cannot give what we have not got; nor can we teach what we do not know. So, how far to blame myself I cannot tell. God knows the measure of my guilt; and whatever it was in this matter, I can only ask Him to wash it so cleanly out in His Son's blood, that no stain shall be left to testify against me in that great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, and when every one shall receive according to his works.

This I do know, that when in the society of these poor silly ones, I was always conscious of many advantages over them; and therefore it is certain that if self had been less thought about and studied, their sad case must have so pressed on me that it would at least have been brought before God in prayer in a much less general way than it was.

Once when some very discontented expression had

escaped me during a call at Mrs. Scott's, she answered, as I well remember, in some words which I have since discovered to be Mr. George Herbert's :

"A man that looks on glass,  
On it may stay his eye;  
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,  
And then the heaven espy."

I didn't see her meaning ; and she was called out of the room before she could finish the lines, and never explained herself ; but there was something in the dissatisfied and disapproving tone in which she uttered the words that prevented me from ever again alluding to the subject to her.

Mr. William must have seen the effect they took on me ; for he said in rather a bitter way, just after she had gone,—

"There, that's the way with all your good people! You must be every whit as strong as they are, or else you are not worth looking at!"

I never heard him speak of his mother in that way before. But as soon as he had uttered the words, it seemed to strike him that he had said something very impolite ; for he immediately added,—

"I beg your pardon, Miss Conyngham. Pray do not imagine that I meant that you were not good, or as good as my mother, only——" and then he hesitated, and added

still more confusedly, "Sometimes one attaches a peculiar sense to that epithet, you know."

I never was quick at an answer in such little dilemmas, and just then could think of nothing to say but—

"Oh, I quite understand."

But he might easily have seen, and did see, I think, that I was not flattered at being excepted from the right to that adjective, even in the sense which I knew he meant to attach to it; for though since I came to London I had heard many people called good men or women who had made no profession of any kind of belief in the Christian religion, yet at home I had never heard it used as meaning any but those who loved the Lord, and tried to please Him.

Mrs. Scott did not mean to be unsympathising; and it was not her fault that she was prevented from explaining her words. I knew that; and yet I had a good cry that night over what I persuaded myself was her unkind manner, and comforted myself with the recollection that at least one person did not agree with her.

After all, it was a good thing that she did not adopt a more compassionate tone, and that I was then held back from going to her again with that trouble. She might have taken to pity me; and too much pity is not good for us. I am quite sure of that.

It is another of the things which I have learnt as I came along the road.

Very soon after that the Scotts went away from home, at Colonel Cooper's pressing recommendation ; and I felt duller than ever.

But I forgot to tell you that, while they had been at Bath, they had written to Mr. William several times on this subject, and that, in consequence, a sort of hope seemed to have sprung up in his mind that perhaps, after all, he might get well.

I never knew till then that all his illness had been caused by injuries which he had received while trying to extricate a poor old man from the midst of a savage mob in which he had got entangled. I think it was while those riots were going on about the Excise Bill. But, whatever it was, he had been so knocked about that he had been ill ever since, poor fellow ! And his doctors had tried leeches, and blood-letting, and blisters, over and over again, and had made him take quantities of nauseous draughts, all in vain. Only they had never recommended change of air, or baths, or any of those remedies which Mrs. Cooper so much preferred ; which, I can't but think, was a great pity ; and, indeed, as things turned out, they were proved to be wrong, and Colonel Cooper a better physician, though we didn't like the prescription at the time.

But Charley came home for his holidays while they were gone ; and I could not tell you how we had looked forward to that six weeks, and what a six weeks of happi-



ness we had thought it would be ; for Charley was not only, in our eyes, immensely clever and good : he had also a very warm and sociable disposition ; and up to that time we had always shared all his joys and sorrows.

It was a considerable drawback, that while he was at home the Scotts would be away ; for we had planned to do so many things together ; and when he wrote, he had always talked of the comfort of having a house to go to where he need not always be minding his manners. It wasn't fair of him to speak so ; but, somehow, Charley never took to our cousins, and from the first he *had* taken a great fancy to Mr. William Scott.

However, it was not to be ; and we had to do the best we could in Queen Square, getting leave to ramble about together as often as possible, and dreaming of what we would do another time. Colonel Cooper also planned many pleasures for us, and would often take us on the water when it was hot ; and that summer was intensely hot ; I recollect very few like it.

Perhaps there were more pleasure parties on the Thames that year than usual. We heard people say so ; but, never having seen that noble river before, I cannot say : only I know that in an evening it used to present a very gay scene. We thought those excursions most delightful ; and as for Charley, he enjoyed nothing so much all those holidays. Indeed, it was only on the water that he ever seemed quite like his own old dear self. At other times

he was often so silent and reserved that, though 'Annie and I never confessed it to each other, we both felt that he was not our old Charley at all, and inwardly wished that he had never gone to school.

One of those water-parties comes very vividly before my mind at this moment; so that I seem to see everybody just as they then looked.

Colonel Cooper had ordered an open barge, manned by four watermen and a careful steersman, to be ready for us at Somerset Stairs, where we went on board; and we ladies—that is, Mrs. Cooper, a friend of hers, Annie, and myself—drove down in the carriage, carrying with us plenty of cold provisions and claret for the voyage. At the Stairs we met the Colonel, Charley, and a curious, old-fashioned gentleman, who proved a very agreeable companion, and entertained us with most diverting anecdotes during most part of the time. He had been a great deal about the world, and had seen many strange countries; but they had not weaned him from his native land, or made him less keen in the enjoyment of our scenery.

The Colonel was greatly amused at his constantly reiterated protestations that, of all the rivers he had seen, none, in his opinion, came up to the Thames. "It was the most magnificent river in the universe." Of course this declaration made him very popular with the boatmen; and as often as the old gentleman repeated the sentiment we had to stop and give three hearty cheers for "Old

Father Thames " and Mr. Dudley. This, however, drew down upon us an unusual amount of what was commonly called "water language" from the watermen of other boats as they passed; and, in truth, I do not know anything more offensive.

It was aimed chiefly at our good old friend, whose antiquated doublet, with its little buttons, broad laced cravat, and formal perriwig, all very considerably out of date, provoked the most insulting remarks from these rough fellows, and such as excited a volley of retaliation from our own rowers that was by no means agreeable to listen to. Indeed, I remember that Annie and I grew quite alarmed, and wondered greatly that, if the Colonel did not object to the language, he did not, at least, see the peril in which we were placed by their inattention to their duty. But he was an old soldier, and his blood was up on behalf of his friend, which led him to give utterance to many of those expressions to which we had now become a little accustomed, but which, as I told you, at first shocked us greatly. The good old gentleman, on the contrary, who seemed quite unmoved by the jeers heaped on himself, was only concerned to allay the storm which his eccentricities had raised. Nothing like an oath escaped his lips; and, though he uttered no word of reproof, the Colonel became evidently uneasy beneath his grave, steadfast gaze; and afterwards, when we had landed at Putney, I heard him, as if in excuse for himself, loudly and vehe-

mently descanting on the rascality of those water fellows and their abominable language.

"They are worse than the hackney coachmen, I protest," he said; "and both races deserve to be swept from the face of the earth."

"Eh! but which of us here does not?" mildly asked the old gentleman.

"Which of *us*?" exclaimed Mrs. Cooper, indignantly.

But the Colonel merely remarked in a sarcastic tone,—

"My dear, you need not be offended; for Mr. Dudley thinks worse of himself than he does of either you or me."

"I am much obliged to him for his compliment, notwithstanding," she rejoined with some warmth; "but I suppose we owe it all to the influence of some of these preaching agitators of the age."

By those I knew she meant the Methodists; and wondered that, if this gentleman belonged to them, he should have been admitted of our party. He was indeed the only one of those good people whom I ever saw in my cousin's company, with the exception of Mrs. Scott; and of late they had spoken less respectfully of her than they used to do. However, he may have been an old friend, or perhaps once on a time may have conferred some favour on them, or they may not previously have known 'how far gone he was,' to use their own expression. Yet, for a few moments it seemed likely that the good-humour of our

party would be at an end, when somehow the old gentleman's quiet manner conquered ; and soon, instead of discussing the question which had been raised, the others were listening to the excuses put forward by him on behalf of his recent revilers.

" Every one's guilt," he said, " must be measured by the measure of his or her light and knowledge. Now, these poor fellows, it is true, were like the Arabs, opposed to every one, and every one opposed to them ; but then who had cared for their souls ? Who had taught them more than the wild heathen know ? Who had set before them the only motive which was likely to soften any hardened hearts ? "

Then I remember how the Colonel rejoined by insisting that they were without excuse ; that they knew well enough that they had no right to insult and cheat people as they did ; and that respectable Christians were fully justified in treating them as past improvement. " Why, not a month ago," he said, " I saw a hackney coachman and a waterman carried to Tyburn in company. I don't know for what offence, I am sure ; and I don't care. All I know is, that not one single person showed them any pity as they passed along, and that the friend with whom I was walking, a very learned and humane man, remarked to me, ' There go two more of those wretched dogs ! What a relief it would be if we could hang the whole race of them ! ' "

The words made me shudder ; but it was some comfort to hear Mr. Dudley's rejoinder,—

“ Probably he did not just then recall the Saviour's reply to the accusers of that poor woman whom they had brought in all her guilt before Him.”

I thought it made our cousins wince ; but they turned off the subject with some light answer, and began to talk of other things.

As for me, somehow I couldn't get rid of the thoughts which Mr. Dudley's words suggested. It seemed so dreadful that there should be such numbers of people in England who had never heard the message of God's love to sinners, and who were as ignorant as those poor idolaters to whom the good Hans Egede, and Ziegenbalg, and Plutscho went to preach the gospel ! We had none such at Mayfield ; for even the most ignorant and the poorest knew the way to be saved, though they wouldn't all walk in it. And it seemed stranger than the strangest thing I ever heard, that all the Christians in London should have just left these poor fellows to go on to destruction unpitied and unwarned, and yet blame them because they were not as good as themselves. Then came the recollections of Mr. Whitefield's preaching in Moorfields and Kennington Common, to all those masses of rough folk ; and that was like a little ray of comfort ; for I thought that perhaps some poor hackney coachmen or watermen may have been among them.

And another thought came, too, at that time, which formed itself into a strong wish, and stuck by me. It was the thought of our darling mother's words to Charley when we were telling her what father had told us of those good Danish missionaries down in the south of Hindoostan: "Charley, how would you like to go?" Only, instead of wanting him to be a missionary all that long way off, I thought of our home heathen, and longed for him to be a missionary to them. Our mother would have wished that, surely, I thought, if she had only heard all these dreadful stories of ignorance and wickedness which we in London were always hearing.

So all the rest of that pleasant day on the river I was planning and planning how I could talk to our brother about it, and how I could get him to feel as I did.

But somehow it was not so easy to talk to Charley now about anything important, as it used to be when we were younger, and had hardly any secrets from each other. He had a sort of way now of shutting your mouth, when you spoke of anything that he did not choose to talk about, which was not like his old good-tempered self, and sometimes made me feel disposed to cry. And so my plans all came to nothing after all; for I never said a word to him about it.

His holidays passed away; and he went back to school; but neither Annie nor I missed him so much as we had expected to do, though the Scotts were not yet come back

to town ; and we were thrown very much on our own resources.

At least I was ; for Annie's little friend returned to school just as Charley went away ; and when those two children could be together, they wanted nobody else.

As for me, I spent a good deal of time just then over my French lessons, and became very much interested in the life of Charles XII., King of Sweden, which was written by that M. Voltaire, of whom my aunt had spoken in her letter. Mr. Scott had lent it to me before he went away with his mother, and told me that I should not find much infidelity in that. M. Voltaire writes in a very interesting way, I think. I was engaged also in copying a group of flowers in water colours, intended for a present to Mrs. Scott on her return. I had heard from her once since she had been away, and Annie had received a letter from Mr. William, which pleased her immensely. He always made a sort of pet of her.

The letters were both dated from Tonbridge Wells, and they told us how much good the waters were doing him, and how glad he was that he had taken Col. Cooper's advice. What a blessing it is that there are those chalybeate springs in so many parts of England ! I think they sometimes really do more good than the doctors, especially as they are so often found situated in healthful and lovely spots where the eye is delighted with beautiful scenery, and where the air is often so pure and fresh that



it seems of itself to do one good, even without reckoning the effect of the waters!

And yet I fancy that of late years, since Dr. Russell visited the little town of Brighthelmstone, and gave himself up to writing and talking about the benefits of sea-bathing, the fashion for visiting these inland watering places has a little gone off. Salt is very wholesome, and you know our Saviour speaks of it as something which preserves purity; so I dare say that the salt sea-breezes and the salt in the water may do a certain sort of good to the blood in our bodies. They say that Brighthelmstone has grown very much since Dr. Russell sent so many patients there, and that now, from being a very insignificant place, it has a population of nearly 3,000. I have heard that it received at one time a colony of Flemings, who no doubt fled from some persecution on account of their religion, poor souls! so I cannot help feeling rather interested about the place.

But Tonbridge Wells must have the advantage in scenery; for Mr. Scott spoke a great deal of the splendid and very wide-stretching views, and of the large common covered with those golden blossoms of the furze which once delighted the Swedish botanist, Linnæus, so much, that it is said he fell down on his knees, and thanked God he had lived to see such a sight. I don't mean to say that that happened on the common at Tonbridge Wells; only it was the same blossoms which so enchanted the great man; I suppose they don't have them in his country.

Tonbridge Wells Common, they said, stretched over a large space of very broken and undulating ground, dotted over with large rocks such as one would expect only to see near the cliffs on the sea-shore. It is quite a mystery how they came there; nevertheless, they are found all about that country, and especially at Eridge, the seat of the Nevilles, and once visited by Queen Elizabeth.

There is Rusthall Common, too, which lies on the top of the hill beyond Mount Ephraim, and from that you look down over a lovely spot called "The Happy Valley."

Mr. William wrote in his letter this description of the town, and how the visitors lived there: "It lies at the bottom of the common, around the wells, and there also stands the church, which is a chapel of ease to the parish church at Tonbridge. Most of the visitors spend their time in a somewhat monotonous manner at the wells; but I suppose they enjoy themselves. Almost at break of day they visit the spring, and drink their glass of water, a sage leaf being invariably handed to them afterwards by the attendant, to prevent the iron from discolouring the teeth. From the wells some of the more serious go to prayers at the chapel, and then the gentlemen take their pipe before breakfast. Another pipe succeeds the meal, and then a visit to the market, which is situated

'Close by the wells, upon a spacious plain,  
Where rows of trees make a delightful lane;'

and furnished with every luxury, especially fish. In the

afternoon, another glass of water is taken, and after dinner another pipe. Then the evening finishes with bowls or reading. The finest bowling-green is on Rusthall Common, and dancing goes on there; but on the whole it seems that Tonbridge Wells is a much quieter place than Bath."

Mr. William never smoked, and of course could not play at bowls; so he and his mother spent those times, he said, either in lounging on the common with their favourite authors, and thus inhaling all the fresh air which they could, or in taking drives to visit the places of interest around.

And Mrs. Scott wrote quite joyfully about the effect which all this was having on her dear son's health. It seemed like life to him, she said; and now she could not help hoping that instead of seeing him gradually fade away out of her sight, as he had appeared to be doing for the last five years, or at best remain always a feeble invalid, he might in time come to be a man able to go about like other men, and do his work in the world.

## CHAPTER XI.

LET me see. It must have been somewhere about the end of August or the beginning of September when that terrible disappointment came upon us about Charley. I know the Scotts were back again; and that the great heat and closeness of London was undoing some of the good which Mr. William had got while he was away.

I haven't got the letter which told all about it; for it was written, not to me, but to Colonel Cooper. However, I read it all; for it was lent to me for a day or two. He said he would rather not tell us himself, because, of course, it would vex us.

It was one evening that the letter came; and then everything was settled,—everything except getting the Colonel's consent; and that indeed it would have been awkward for him to withhold, when things had gone so far, had he wished it, which he did not.

How we did long then for Aunt Judith! she being the only other person who had any right to interfere.

It was of no use for us to talk to the Colonel, and tell him how earnestly father had said before he died that he

did hope that Charley would choose a profession that would not take him out of England. He only answered that he never heard that before, and that "no prohibition was left on record for him to carry out. If our father ever said such a thing, it must have been in the ravings of delirium; for no brave naval officer could have wished to bind his son to stay at home against his will. And as to sisters trying to keep their brother tied to their apron-strings, it was quite absurd! Besides, what was the boy to do? It was out of the question for a Conyng-ham to go into trade. He hated physic and the law: if he were his son, he shouldn't go into the Church; so what remained but a choice between army and navy?"

In fact, it was plain enough that Colonel Cooper envied Charley from the bottom of his heart for being young enough to go. And long did he descant on the glory of the cause in which he was to fight, and the pride which we ought to feel in him.

Well, we cried ourselves to sleep that night, and went down with red eyes to breakfast next morning, on which the Colonel bantered us a good deal; but Mrs. Cooper was very kind in her manner, kinder than she had been to me for several weeks. I remember that she invited us to go out in the carriage shopping with her, which we liked well enough sometimes; only that day we had no heart for it, and begged off. So we stayed in our own room, that one which had such a beautiful view

from the window ; and Mrs. Norris said that she would come and dress our hair. I didn't care what she did, nor what we did ; so when my sister's was finished I sat down, and while she combed away I read over and over again Charley's letter.

Annie stood by the window all the time without speaking a word. Poor child ! she had thought so much of her brother, and had flattered her little heart that he cared too much for her ever to go so far away ; for I could see that she was not only grieved, but rather hurt and offended at the step he had taken.

Meantime, Mrs. Norris, kind old soul that she was, kept trying to amuse us with all sorts of gossip about what she had seen and done during all the years that she had been in service, and especially about the various fashions which she could remember. For I think her notion was that it was no use treating this as a heavy trial. Soldiers there must be, and sailors there must be too ; and boys would have their fancies, some of them in that direction, which was a good thing for the country, if not for the wives and mothers and sisters ; so what was the use of fretting ?

But she didn't begin that way, nor come to it until it was plain to her mind that no trifling talk would do any good.

First she set to work for perhaps the hundredth time to try to argue me out of my prejudice against powder,

declaring that I should look nobody knew how much younger if I would only consent to wear it like other people. It was all owing to my countrified life, that notion of mine that brown or black hair was more becoming than white for young people. Why, some twenty years before, nothing but white was thought to be worth a penny! Wigs, too, they were so nice, so youthful and convenient. In her girlhood even small children wore them, and persons of the very best taste used them! Norris did not often run on in that way, though she was a lady's maid, and such things came in the way of duty to her. So the very strangeness of her conversation roused me up a little; and when she saw her advantage, she pursued it by pestering me with innumerable questions about how my hair should be dressed;—whether I would have it pinned up short, or have curls at the side—until I grew quite peevish, and was pronounced to be an ungrateful young lady for taking no interest in her work.

In short, though Norris could talk sense enough generally, and we were often glad to get a chat with her, and had treated her as a confidante, yet that day she seemed to think it better policy to talk nonsense.

At last, however, the hairdressing was done, and then she said,—

“Just nine months ago to-day, Miss Judith! do you remember that evening?”

You would have known her for a London maid by that word. In our old home the servants kept to the old-fashioned Mistress Judith or Anne.

But the question startled Annie out of her dreamy mood, and she turned round suddenly, saying, "What day, Norris?"

"Oh! I thought you were going back to it in your mind, my dear," answered Norris, "and that that was the reason why you were so quiet."

"I wasn't thinking at all, that I know of," Annie returned, a little bit sharply.

"Well, I remember it, if you do not, my young lady," persisted Norris. "I was as busy as could be, all in a drive and a bustle from morning to night, getting this room ready, among other things; and in the evening a coach drove up."

"And we got out of it, of course," cried Annie. "It was my birthday; and I've often thought how cruel it was of them to choose that day of all others to take me away from Mayfield,—dear old Mayfield!" she added, passionately.

"As to that, my dear, I suppose those as had the care of you were the best judges; and all I know is, that this house has been a deal lightsomer since we had young faces and voices in it. And another thing I know, too, which is, that I thought that day what a fine young gentleman Master Charley was for taking care of his sisters."



"Ah! Norris," I broke in, "you never thought then how soon he'd be for leaving us alone among strangers, I'm sure."

"I don't know about that, Miss Judith," she answered. "Boys will be boys, even the best of them; and I don't know but what when I was young myself, if I had thought of growing up to a man instead of to a woman, I wouldn't have liked to see a bit of the world afore I settled down."

Annie looked up in a minute, as if a new idea had struck her, and said rather pettishly,—

"And I'm pretty sure I should; but then," and she broke out into fresh sobs,—"it's so hard for us!"

"Well, I'm beat altogether," said Norris, when she heard those sobs. "Come, come, my dear, you mustn't take on so. You'll see some day what a fine fellow Master Charley will come back to us; and then you won't know how to be glad enough that he went."

"At any rate, I suppose it's of no use fretting," said Annie, after a minute or two; and then with a violent effort she choked down her sobs, and said to me,—

"Judith, I remember now that I was thinking of something just now when Mrs. Norris spoke to me; and if you like, I'll tell you what it was. You know, when we first came here, how glad we were to find ourselves not quite in London after all, and how nice it seemed to have all this side of the square open to the fields, with

the hills behind. But ever since then I have been longing to get to the top of them; and yet we never have. One day Colonel Cooper took me a little way in his coach; but before we had gone far along the Hollow Way, he said that the roads were too bad for the horses, so we didn't even get to that stone where Whittington sat down and listened to the Bow bells telling him how he should be thrice Lord Mayor of London. And I never even got in sight of the High Gate, which I wanted so much to go under.

“That was one part of my thoughts; but they didn't begin with that. You know you are not well, and have not been strong for a good while. Mistress Cooper often says that you are thinner than you ought to be; and she told the doctor the other day,—for I heard her,—and asked him if he had not noticed it. He said he had, and that several times he had thought your blood was in a bad state, and that it would do you good if he were to take away a little of it;—I suppose that what was left might have more room to move. But you remember our father did not like that way; and I don't want you to be bled; and I don't believe it would do you any good at all. Only you mustn't be ill; I can't have you ill while Charley is away. So I thought, you see, that if Mistress Cooper would take us some rooms on the top of that hill, or near the wells at Hampstead, it might do instead, and your cheeks might get pink again, as they used to be.

Mrs. Cooper has been to Bath, and Mrs. Scott and Mr. William have been to Tonbridge; but we haven't been anywhere. Oh! dear good Norris, couldn't you persuade her? It will be so dull after Charley is gone; and Judith will fret;—oh! we can't stay here. Do see what you can do; you know you can coax her into anything."

But Norris only smiled and shook her head, which made Annie all the more eager. As for me, I was older, and couldn't forget the trouble, nor understand how Annie could talk so.

Therefore I called her a silly child, and bid her not think of troubling Mrs. Cooper, little dreaming that she was really uneasy in her young mind about me.

Then I remember that Mrs. Norris brought us our hoods, which she had been altering to fit us, and we went off to Mrs. Scott, to tell her of our trouble.

She was playing on her harpsichord when we entered, and called us to listen to a new anthem of Mr. Handel's, which she had just been singing to her son. The music was very beautiful, and seemed to have a sweet, soothing effect on me, even though I was in haste to tell my tale.

Of course we thought she knew nothing about it; for it was never her way to make people wait when they had sorrows which they wanted to unburden. But yet we found that she did know; for as soon as we began to speak, Mr. William told us that he too had had a letter

from Charley that morning; and he called him a young scamp, and seemed very sorry for us.

You see, all the talk that I had heard about this Spanish war made me think that it would not be a good and a just one at all; and that was one reason why I was so set against it. No doubt it was very silly of a girl like me to have any opinion about such matters; and yet when one is always hearing any subject talked about, it is hard not to think *something*.

I knew too that all along Mr. William had been for peace, and that he thought we had not sufficient grounds for war. And yet now, when I talked in that way, he wouldn't hear of it, but said that we must take care of England's honour, and not let other nations trample upon us. He said, too, that he knew just how Charley felt, because at his age he had been wild to go abroad himself, though it was to the Indies he wanted to be off.

"Of course I couldn't when my father died," he said; "or else my mother would have been left all alone. And yet, after all, if I had gone, you see, as it turned out, I shouldn't have been such a trouble to her. I only seem to have stayed at home to get laid up for life; while Charley, perhaps, may be running away from danger by going."

We stared, and couldn't make out what he meant, until he said,—

"Why, haven't you found out before this, that your brother has lots of Tory blood in him, and is as likely

as not any day to be joining in some wild scheme for helping the Pretender, who is so often promising us the treat of a visit? And if he did, you might have him losing his head as a traitor, instead of gaining honour and glory in fighting his country's battles. So, to my thinking, it is not so much amiss that he should go to get sobered in teaching the Spaniards better manners."

I had never thought of that danger at all; and it made me shudder; and yet it was a little comfort. But Annie cried out, "Oh, dear! dear! I think it is dreadful to be a boy at all!" At which we could not help laughing.

Mrs. Scott did not say much about it; only she was very kind, and held my hand very tightly while we were talking.

But Mr. William told us a great deal about Charley's commander, Commodore Anson, of whom he had heard through a friend of his. He thought that he could not sail under a better man, nor a more humane and thorough-going officer.

Only the worst of it was that the Government would not give him his proper complement of fighting men, but insisted on his making shift with a lot of poor old invalids out of Chelsea College, a great many of whom deserted when they heard their fate, and the rest went on board in a kind of despair.

It was one of Charley's apologies for going at all, that our father's faithful servant, old Rogers, was forced into the service, and that he must go and see after him.

Well, Annie; we only saw our brother once after that for more than three long years. He came to bid us good-bye, and was like himself then, full of talk, and very affectionate. We knew now why he couldn't talk when he was at home before: it was because he could only think of what he knew we should not like to hear.

We wanted to go down to Portsmouth to see him off; but Colonel Cooper would not take us; he thought it better not; so Charley sent us a letter back by the pilot, and in it he said that the sight of Admiral Vernon's twenty-five big ships of the line, fully manned, and destined for the same service, put most of the crews into a fury of rage and envy. For my part, I would rather my brother had been sent to fight the enemy in the open and manly way which the Admiral was ordered to take, rather than to have to go and worry the poor people of the Spanish colonies of Chili and Peru, who had done us no harm that we could hear. However, after all, the Admiral's expedition did not come to much, while Anson made himself a great name; and, as Mrs. Scott always said, where we couldn't help or hinder, we should always try to hope. Indeed, there was nothing else left for us poor girls to do.

Charley sailed in the *Centurion*, the Commodore's own ship, which was accompanied by five smaller ships of the line, besides two victuallers; and oh! it was such a long, long time before we heard a word from him, or knew whether he was dead or alive!

## CHAPTER XII.

AND now I am coming to what I always look back on as the most joyless part of my whole life. We had a change, and a great change, that autumn; but it was not at all of the kind for which Annie was wishing. I will tell you how it came about.

We had been spending the day with the Scotts, not long after Charley sailed; and a very pleasant one it had been.

Fanny Prescott came in the evening. It was the first time I had met her since that midnight talk which we had together; for she had been away visiting.

There was a young gentleman with her on this occasion; and I soon perceived that if I was interested in her I ought to be in him too. He seemed to me a most heavenly-minded young man; for he discoursed of little besides godly matters; and when, at Mrs. Scott's desire, he conducted the usual family prayers, I felt it very good to be in such company, so that Fanny's lot appeared to me an exceedingly enviable one.

She and I had not been left alone that day; but I well

remember that I was watching for an opportunity of telling her how much I rejoiced with her, when a messenger arrived from Queen Square with evil tidings.

Poor Mrs. Cooper was seized with the distemper which had begun to prevail in London in consequence of the great heat. She had been ailing for a day or two; but, as she was often unwell, no one had taken alarm until a few hours before; and now she was quite ill.

The messenger came to beg Mrs. Scott to keep us with her for the present, as the fever was considered terribly infectious; but he added that the Colonel would arrange something for us very shortly. And we soon found that he was determined to send us, as he considered, out of harm's way into the country, because the doctor declared that the fever would spread fast, and that young persons were the most likely to get it.

I well remember how the idea of going into the country pleased Annie, and how she talked away of what she would do when she got there, just as if she were going back to our own old home; and she would be as free to follow her own fancies as she used to be when she was the petted little one of a fast-fading mother.

But it was far different with me, hopefulness being no feature in my character at that period, and my only desire being to keep near the friends whom I had found, and who seemed just then the only possible ones for me in the whole wide world.



However, we got no further message about ourselves for some days to come, the poor Colonel being wholly absorbed in his wife's state; for she had become so bad that her life was at one time almost despaired of.

I think death never looked so terrible to me as when it seemed that our clever, lively, kind-hearted cousin was about to become its prey, all unprepared as we feared she was; and I longed for news all day long. It is true, Norris sent me a message from time to time, scrawled on a scrap of paper, for she was but a poor scholar; but it always ended with something like this: "Oh, pray—do pray, all of you, for my dear mistress; for she is terribly affrighted whenever she has her reason, though my master always comforts her as well as he can by telling her what a good life she has led." But those messages did not satisfy me; do you think they could? And night after night, as I lay upon my bed, did the image of my poor cousin haunt me, now as she used to look in the whirl of excitement amidst a throng of her friends; and anon, as she then was, in the flush of fever, and in the agony of fear. One night—I remember it well, for it succeeded to a day of great alarm, caused by rumours of the epidemic all around us, though the heat was gone, and there had been rough weather—we had retired to bed early, but not to sleep. No one slept much that night; for the wind had continued rising until not even the loudest voice could have been heard. Annie crept trembling into my

bed, and nestled into my arms. I could feel her tremble all over; but it was only between the gusts that I could catch a sound, and then it was always of crashing chimney-pots or of falling beams. The house seemed to rock; and we thought it would fall, as we supposed by the sounds others were doing.

Loud and long blew the hurricane. I never heard anything like it. But at length it subsided; and then my young sister, exhausted with her terror, fell fast asleep, with her head on my shoulder. I could therefore no longer toss about, for fear of waking her; nevertheless sleep was never farther from my eyes.

My head was full of thoughts; indeed, they seemed to rush through my brain without my having the least power to control or arrest them; and, on whatever subject they chose to roam, Mrs. Cooper's suffering form seemed always present. Now I would pray earnestly for her, and then next moment fancy that I had the fever myself. And no wonder; for a fever I undoubtedly had, though it mercifully proved not to be the epidemic, and mostly passed off with the morning light.

We heard next day of much damage, and especially that the wall of Hyde Park had been completely blown down, as also some pinnacles of Westminster Abbey. But the tidings of our poor cousin were better. A turn had come; the great danger seemed past, and there was hope for her; only a long convalescence was apprehended.

What a relief that was! The Colonel then soon began to think about us; and, as it seemed probable that a winter in some warmer climate would be desirable for her, we were told in a day or two that he had written to a distant connection of ours in Wiltshire to take us in, and we were to prepare at once.

Such a preparation that was! for, of course, nothing could be taken with us out of a house where there was fever. Mrs. Scott was like a mother, or else I don't know what we should have done; and, what with shopping and packing, we had little time to think; though when I did, it was Charley and his letters that haunted me. They said that the house in Queen Square would be shut up; and then what would become of his letters, I thought, or how would they ever reach us?

However, Mr. William comforted me by undertaking to see about them; and as I knew that what he engaged to do he never failed in, and that he was so clever that even if he were away himself he could manage so that there should be no slip, I at length dismissed that care.

"I wonder you do not like a change, Miss Conyng-ham," Mr. Scott said, the morning of our departure, looking at me as I had sometimes seen him do at people when he had some reason to think that they were not meaning just what they said.

"Suppose they shouldn't be kind to Annie," I returned, not quite knowing what other reason I could give

for the unaccountable dislike to going away, which I could not conceal.

"Oh, let *me* know about that," he answered, laughing ;  
"I will soon see to it."

And then he added,—

"I am not such a prisoner now as I was ; and, you see, I am so in love with travelling since I made the experiment, that perhaps, if you were in town, I might be dragging my mother out of it ; and you always say that you wouldn't care for London without her, you know. So, after all, perhaps you will be better off in the country. Besides, who knows but you may find friends there who may put us—her, I mean—quite out of mind and memory."

"Never !" I cried passionately ; and at that moment the sound of heavy wheels told us that the coach that was to convey us away was at the door.

Mr. Scott came out himself to see our luggage put up, and to hand us in. It was the first time I had ever heard of his doing such a thing, and a proof of how much better he was getting.

Perhaps he will be out and about in the world like other young men when we come back, I thought, and may be in the army or navy like Charley. If so, we must get Aunt Judith to make poor Mrs. Scott come and live with us in Yorkshire ; for she never could live by herself after having had such a good son to take care of

her. And so, as we rolled away, I stretched out of window, and gave her a last nod and wave of my handkerchief, and Annie did the same, only more merrily.

Thus eleven months after we entered it we left London again, and went back to the scenes of country life.

Our coach was by no means a fast one, and we had to rest and change horses several times on our journey, besides sleeping two nights by the way. But we were undisturbed by the "gentlemen of the road" this time, though not free, I must confess, from some secret fears regarding them; indeed, such thoughts would trouble us whenever we passed through any waste or lonely parts, as also each day when it was growing dusk, in spite of all the assurances which we received of the safety of those parts. Our only inside companions were a somewhat buxom and sufficiently agreeable widow lady and her little boy, a rosy child of six, who were travelling to within a mile of our destination, and consequently excited our interest and curiosity as much as we did theirs.

It was not long before we were all on very good terms, though I could see that no sooner had the good woman discovered with whom we were going to stay than we rose considerably in her estimation, and she evidently regarded us as her superiors. She also became so guarded and cautious in her communications, that my curiosity was but slightly satisfied. I merely learnt that Mr. Ralph Cremlyn's was reckoned one of the first families in the

neighbourhood, and that his elder brother was the squire of a village not many miles distant, and much looked up to; that in the former family there were three daughters and two sons, and in the latter three sons and two daughters; whilst the rector of the place in which the Ralph Cremlyns resided was a cousin of theirs, and bore the same name. This lady herself however, belonged to a small congregation of Independents, to which sect, she said, her family had been attached ever since the days of Cromwell. She made the confession with some little hesitation, and as if she thought that it would necessarily lower her in my estimation.

We reached Woodberry Lodge late in the afternoon of our third day; and though it was growing dark, I could plainly perceive that the house in which we were to stay was of no mean size. Our approach having been announced by the gardener, the house door was opened to us by an old butler; and we instantly found ourselves in a large square hall, the panels and floor of which were of polished oak; while on the walls hung many family pictures, and at the upper end there blazed a large log fire.

Two of the three aforesaid young ladies were there to meet us; namely, Miss Cicely, a blooming maiden of some fourteen years, and little Molly, a child of seven, whose innocent countenance at once took my fancy.

Their mother and Sarah would come to us very soon,

they said; but there was company to-day, and they had not yet left the dining-room. And so we were carried off by them up the wide oaken staircase into a long corridor, and at length reached what we soon learnt to know as the second-best spare bedroom. That was to be ours.

Let me describe it.

The first things we noticed on entering were the two small casement windows, made still smaller by the thick masses of ivy which grew all over that side of the house, and in which were the then deserted nests of many birds. Under each there was a window-seat, and between them stood the small dressing-table with its once handsome oval mirror. Opposite to these windows was the bedstead, an enormous four-poster, curtained all round with faded blue damask, in which Annie and I used to feel quite lost. I remember that the counterpane was a curious patchwork one, made by Mrs. Cremlyn's grandmother, and much prized by her.

The floor of this chamber, like most others in the house, had been polished; but as it was too much to expect the housemaid to keep them all bright and shining, a square piece of carpet, from which the pattern was somewhat worn off, covered the space between the bed and the windows. There were two little washhandstands in opposite corners, a couple of very straight-backed chairs, and a large wardrobe or press, in which, on dark nights, and

especially under certain circumstances, we very easily pictured to ourselves a band of robbers hidden. There was also a cupboard in one corner of the room, and a somewhat wide chimney, in which all through the winter nights the wind howled dismally.

We were not long in getting rid of our travelling wraps, and descending with our young friends to the withdrawing-room, as we had grown very cold on our journey, and were longing to get down to a warm room with a fire. Mrs. Cremlyn and her eldest daughter had just then left the dining-room with the other ladies, and came out as we reached the foot of the stairs; and little Molly whispered,—

“Don't you like mother's best gown? She has got it on to-day. Look!”

I saw that best gown twice after that, though she had many others; for it was worn on all grand occasions, and was composed of an extremely rich silk, so thick that it would have stood out of itself, without the assistance of the wide hoop which she wore under it. The ground of that silk was white; and it had a large flowered pattern all over it, and, I was told, was the exact fac-simile of that worn by one of the court ladies on the occasion of the king's coronation.

I must say, however, that the gown did not attract much of my notice just then; I was too curious about its wearer and her daughters.



And to do them justice, they received us with real hospitality, and were not content until we had eaten an enormous supper, after which we were reconducted to our chamber, and then so tired were we that we soon fell asleep.

As for the gentlemen, we saw nothing of them that night, nor did we hear anything until long after all the ladies had retired to rest, when we were awakened by such a variety of incongruous sounds in the hall, that in my terror I arose and crept to the door to see whether the house were on fire, or whether we were attacked by a band of housebreakers.

Oaths and angry words uttered in thick voices then fell on my ear; and these were mingled with blows and roars of husky laughter. Then came the sound of wheels; and again a servant's voice, saying, "Your horse, sir;" while two gentlemen seemed to be mounting the stairs with the assistance of servants, on which I closed my door with haste, and double-locked it, understanding then that some of the guests were to sleep in the house that night.

Now, Annie, I had not lived in London for nearly a year without becoming fully aware that most gentlemen consider it as much a part of their duty to take care that none of their visitors should leave their houses as steady as they enter them, as the ladies do, that they should do full justice to the savoury dishes of which they have, at least, superintended the cooking. But then, as I have often told you, the Coopers were particular people, and kept within bounds

in everything ; so that I was utterly unprepared for such sounds as these. To those in the house, on the contrary, they appeared quite familiar, for no one was in the least disturbed by them, nor when we met at breakfast, next morning, was any remark made on the matter ; only Mr. Cremlyn himself did not come down until late.

As for his wife, she was astir betimes ; for it was churning day, and all such domestic operations she always saw to herself. Indeed, we found all the girls down before us, and either in the dairy or otherwise engaged about the house, though Miss Sarah had but just come down, and was somewhat sulky because her mother had reproved her for her lazy habits. On our making our appearance, Mrs. Cremlyn kissed us kindly, and told us that she would not have us called on account of our long journey, but that she had no doubt another day we should be more ready to help her than Sally was,—on which the eldest daughter shrugged her shoulders, and made some saucy reply.

Then in came Dick, the eldest son, with his gun over his shoulder, and called loudly for a mug of ale. His mother gently begged him to wait until breakfast was ready, and complained that her brew was not lasting its proper time ; but he would take no denial, and stormed at the maid for being so slow in getting it. Nay, she only escaped a box on the ears by a dexterous movement out of his way.

Breakfast was always a substantial meal at Woodberry Lodge, and as the country air was already giving us an appetite, I dare say we should have done full justice to it, but for our utter amazement at the behaviour of these young people.

I remember that the eldest son and daughter were engaged in a desperate wrangle, when a rosy boy of about twelve years old made his appearance somewhere near the end of the repast, and flung a quantity of nuts and some dozen or so of large brownish apples among the other provisions ; on which Mrs. Cremlyn cried out,—

“ Oh ! Walter, my darling, how could you gather those pippins ? You know that your father has forbidden any of you to touch them, because he wanted them to hang as long as they would on the tree.”

But Walter only laughed and kissed his mother, saying,—

“ Never mind ; he'll never miss them ; and you won't tell, I know. We shall have plenty of time to eat them all before the old boy comes down. He's sure to be safe and snug upstairs to-day for a goodish space yet.”

But before the young gentleman had time to finish his dutiful speech, a side door behind him, which had stood ajar, suddenly opened, and a hand which I knew in a moment to be that of his father, was laid on his shoulder, and without a word he was forced into the hall, where

we soon heard stripes and blows which did not cease until the boy had many times cried for mercy.

At the breakfast-table, meanwhile, there was a sudden lull. Quarrelling and noisy mirth alike ceased; and the only sound was of little Molly's sobs.

Mrs. Cremlyn turned very pale; but she did not move, knowing doubtless by experience, how useless and hazardous it would be to do so; while the others went on eating their breakfasts in the most unconcerned way, just as if nothing unusual had occurred. And when the master of the house entered, and took his seat, no one spoke or stirred, but remained in silence at the table until he had finished, when all the party dispersed; and while Mrs. Cremlyn repaired to her store-room, the two girls hurried me upstairs to show them, they said, the London fashions.

They were much disappointed when they found how little we had brought; but somewhat consoled by the prospect of the box which was shortly to follow. Next I had to go and inspect Miss Sarah's wardrobe, and give what advice I could in order that she might surprise her acquaintances at a dance shortly to be given at a neighbour's house, on the occasion of the coming of age of the eldest son. Cicely privately informed me that for various reasons her mother did not visit at this house, and objected to her daughter's going; but that Sally was set upon it, and was sure to get her way, as she could do anything with her father.

Cicely, however, was soon called away to make a pudding; and Sally, in order to escape being set to any like occupation, made her escape into the orchard, where, looking out of my casement soon after, I saw her in company with some other young people, and where, I believe, she spent the entire morning. At any rate, she did not appear until dinner-time, when she sat between her father and a young gentleman who had come in with her, and with whom she seemed to be carrying on a great deal of merry discourse.

We had sat down to table without any grace, but had scarcely taken our places when the Rev. Henry Cremlyn was announced; and Annie immediately rose, thinking that now, of course, it was going to be said. Nothing, however, was further from that divine's intentions. He seated himself where his knife and fork were placed, and having paid his proper share of compliments to the lady of the house on the very excellent cheer which she had provided on the previous day, began to inquire in a facetious manner after the two guests who had remained under her roof; when I learnt with some surprise that one of them still kept his bed, and that in consequence of a fall which he had had, the apothecary had been summoned. That gentleman, in fact, arrived before we rose from table, and after examining him, pronounced the injuries to be so serious that he counselled him to lose no time in availing himself of the assistance of the clergyman below-stairs,

as he said his time might be very short. Our rector had already swallowed a good deal of strong ale, and was no doubt looking forward to the wine, when his cousin, our host, returned from the sick chamber with this announcement; but I thought even he looked somewhat put out when he heard the reply,—

“What a plague that fellow is! Why couldn’t he wait now until my curate was back, and not give me all this bother!”

At any rate, as he held the door open for him to pass, he muttered something about not taking good places if a fellow did not mean to do the work.

As for us young people, we were all greatly shocked at the idea of having death among us; and I think that the way in which this trouble had come startled even the most thoughtless of us.

Mr. Cremllyn himself seemed distressed, and after pacing up and down the room for some time, he threw himself into an easy-chair, bidding Cicely watch for the Rev. Henry’s coming down, and let him out immediately, as he could not see him again that day; and when she had performed that duty, she came back to us as we all sat together in the bow window, and whispered to me that Mr. Woodhouse and her father were very old friends.

“Aye,” said Dick, in a low tone, “and my god-father. I liked him well; and it is hard for any of us to be forced to go all of a sudden like this.”

"Our father was only ill a very little time," said Annie, in a low tone; "but they say he did not think it hard at all."

"Perhaps he was a saint," returned Dick, with a sneer. And she answered steadily,—

"If poor Mr. Woodhouse isn't one, don't you think he would like to be now, Mr. Richard?"

Dick made no answer, though he stared at the child; but little Molly put her hand into Annie's, and asked almost in a whisper,—

"What is a saint?"

"I'll tell you some day, Molly," returned Annie, kissing her; and at that moment Mrs. Cremlyn entered the room, and hastily desired Sally to come and assist her upstairs, because Mr. Woodhouse was just about to be blooded.

"Me!" cried Sally. "No, indeed, I could not bear the sight of blood. Get one of the maids, mother."

"The maidens are all affrighted," answered Mrs. Cremlyn; "I *must* have one of you. Come, Cicely, if your sister will not."

"Oh, no, mother; I can't indeed. I should faint," said Cicely, drawing back.

And we were about to have another scene; for Mrs. Cremlyn had suddenly become very decided; and her husband, much to the girls' surprise, got up and began to support her authority with angry words,

when I stepped forward and offered my assistance, saying that I was not afraid, as I had often seen persons blooded.

Poor Mr. Woodhouse ! He had passed a dreadful night, having struck his head when he fell in attempting to mount the stairs ; so that he was really stunned, and not only stupefied with liquor as the men thought when they laid him on the bed and left him there. It seemed that he soon came to himself, and lay for hours unable to move, but in great agony and in a high fever. For, besides the injury to his head, he had broken several ribs, and sprained his ankle desperately ; so that he could not move, but remained longing for the day, and parched with thirst.

A very aged woman sat with him when we entered the room ; and after the surgeon had done his work, she and I remained watching by him for some time.

At first his speech was hurried and incoherent ; but by degrees he grew quieter, and at length fell into a doze. Then the poor old soul told of the parson's visit, and how to his repeated inquiries whether he had anything on his mind, or any sin which particularly troubled him, he could only get this answer, " Any ? Aye, indeed, many, Mr. Henry ; but it was you who helped me into them, and you'll follow me where I am going. Be you sure of that."

She added that Mr. Henry was angry at first, and then



seemed terrified, until at last he ran downstairs and out of the house.

"Ah!" she said, "I know a good man who could have spoken to the poor soul; but they don't count him a minister at all. God help us! We are in a sorry plight."

### CHAPTER XIII.

THE sick man's sleep lasted for some hours ; and though he started a good deal, and at times seemed to be troubled by frightful dreams, yet Mrs. Cremlyn pronounced it a good sign ; and her husband, who evidently thought more of women's powers in sickness than when all was going on well, was greatly comforted by her opinion.

Towards nightfall, however, he opened his eyes, and began staring about wildly, complaining of terrible pain in the head and a deadly faintness ; so that Mrs. Cremlyn declared she would herself watch all night, and not leave him until she saw a change ; only she desired a companion ; and when I found that she looked to me as one used to sickness, I gladly offered my services, wondering all the time how soon work had come to me in a house to which I had been murmuring all the morning that I should ever have been sent.

Annie was sleeping soundly when I went into my room to exchange my evening gown for a dressing-wrapper ; and as I expected to have little to do but watch, I took my Bible in my hand, and a little book which had been

my father's last gift to me. Then I stole back as noiselessly as I could, and took my place in a corner to which Mrs. Cremlyn pointed, where she supposed I should be out of sight; for the doctor had desired that the sick man should not be bewildered with many faces.

I don't know whether it would have made much difference; for he seemed to see multitudes of people, and would call to one and another by name, and sometimes in a manner that was very fearful. At first he was so impatient and so violent that he would scarcely allow any one to approach him even to apply the lotion that was ordered for his head; and it required a vast amount of skilful management to get him to swallow the draughts which had to be administered every hour. Moreover, he evidently supposed his kind nurse to be some woman to whom he had a great dislike, and would order her out of his sight with loud words, and sometimes oaths. At length, however, either her patient gentleness won the day, or else some change in the disease took place; for after a short doze he awoke just at three o'clock, under the full impression that she was his own mother. Now he was all submission, and took everything she offered, only seeming to quail beneath her eye like a son who knew himself to be in disgrace, though whenever she moved away he would look after her with a wistful gaze.

"You used to read once," he said, timidly, after this

had gone on about half an hour. "Read to me now, some of those words,—His words. They were for me once; now they can't be, I know;" and here he gave a heavy sob. "Still read them to me once again; but you can't now, I know. I had forgotten, your voice is too weak. But *she* can read, *she is* reading, and out of that book, too. Tell her to read."

As I said, I thought I had been hidden, and so did Mrs. Cremlyn, and we both started at these words; but they were uttered so imperatively, and with so much nervous excitement, that she saw that he must be instantly obeyed, and whispered to me,—

"Read just where you are, child, and begin at once."

The fifteenth chapter of St. Luke was open before me, and I began at the eleventh verse, the story of the Prodigal Son, feeling at every word that surely I must have been guided to have that passage open,—so appropriate did every bit of it seem.

He listened with an interest that was fearfully intense. I could hear his breath come quick and short, and felt that his eyes were fixed on me as I read.

"Ah! yes; *I* know that story, *I* remember it," he said, when I had done. "My mother often read it to me when I was at home in my father's house. Thirty years ago, that is; and I have *never* read it since,—*never*; but I remember it; I do."

And then the but lately strong man covered his face

with his hands, and wept bitter tears, sobbing out, as if he had quite forgotten our presence,—

“Mother, mother; if only I had minded; but you are dead and gone long ago. You wouldn’t know me now.”

I never saw any one look so horrified as Mrs. Cremlyn then. She evidently thought that she had made a fatal mistake in allowing me to read; though, as she said, she couldn’t imagine why that simple story should so upset him. But—wisely, I think—she let him alone until the time came for the next draught, when she signed to me to give it; and after a time he once more fell into a deep sleep,—troubled and disturbed, it is true, but this time by more wholesome dreams.

The doctor was with us betimes next morning, and, to our great relief, he thought far better of his patient, and hoped that the worst danger was past; and now his orders were chiefly that he should be humoured in every possible way; for this, he said, was of very great importance, as he knew him to be a man of a hasty and irritable temperament, which we proved during the time of his recovery, though, for the next day or two, he was wondrous gentle and patient.

Mrs. Cremlyn and I, with the assistance of the aged woman whom I have mentioned, did the nursing between us, as the young ladies thought that as I had begun, and was used to such things, I had better go on; but I must

say that my work consisted chiefly in reading out of what he called "Mother's old book."

I had to choose my own chapters, as he could not help in that way; but I found that he generally had some recollection of them, and at times a very vivid one, though after that first night he seldom made many comments.

He seemed to prefer listening to studying the book himself, and would sometimes praise my voice and manner of reading, saying that it soothed him, and quieted his nerves; nor did he ever ask for any other book.

Meantime things in the house quickly returned to their usual course. Mr. Cremlyn would be out most of the day with his dogs or horses; and his cousin, the rector, was frequently with him. Mrs. Cremlyn would be occupied with household matters, or in visiting among her friends; while the young people passed their time much as they pleased, with the exception of Walter and Molly, who were still sent daily to school.

As for Dick, we seldom saw much of him; for he was generally engaged in some scheme of his own, and found it prudent to keep a good deal out of his father's sight. There was something about that youth which inspired me with a strong feeling of disgust the first moment I saw him; and yet, with the exception of his mouth, he might have been called handsome. People said that he resembled his mother; but that feature certainly spoiled the likeness, being more like a bull-dog's than that of a

human being. I often wondered at her great fondness for him ; for there was nothing about her at all in harmony with his low and vulgar tastes.

Nor did he inherit them from his father ; for Mr. Ralph Cremlyn was, in bearing and manners, when sober, a thorough specimen of a country gentleman ; and I have sometimes thought that it must have been the diversity in their tastes which caused there to be so little love lost between them ; for indeed they said the scenes that took place between that father and son frequently upset the whole household ; and I had not been many hours in the house before I saw how things stood.

One day—I remember it well, it was on a Sunday evening, the first after we arrived, and just when the alarm about Mr. Woodhouse had passed away, as it did long before the danger was thoroughly over—Annie and I had been to church in the morning, and Cicely and Molly had accompanied us. Mrs. Cremlyn seldom went, and Mr. Cremlyn never ; but now and then one or two of the young people would go for a part of the time, especially if they had nothing else to do, and wanted to exhibit a new hat or gown.

There were perhaps not more than forty people in church, of whom some were the school children ; and the service began half an hour late, because the parson had been out to dinner the night before, and his servant had forgotten to call him. Nevertheless he had a fine voice,

and except that he was somewhat irreverent in his manner, he did not read badly. Moreover the sermon, which was one that I have since heard several times preached in different churches, was rather a good one. I tried to get Cicely to talk about it as we walked home; but found, to my disappointment, that her attention had been wholly engrossed with something that was going on in the next pew, and that she had heard nothing.

On our road home, two young gentlemen joined us, who, I found, were the curates of neighbouring parishes. Gay young fellows they were, and very merry at having got through their work quicker than we had, and ridden so fast that their horses, being quite spent, had to be left at the village inn. Cicely and I did not want for compliments and fine speeches as we walked home together; but it was when pretty Mistress Sarah appeared at the gate, in her bright flowered muslin, looped up with bunches of ribbons, and her high-heeled coloured shoes with their silver buckles, all fresh from London, that they grew really eloquent.

There was a handsome dinner; but only those guests who came as a matter of course on Sundays were there, none others being invited that day, that the house might be kept quiet.

Nevertheless the party soon grew very merry; and the presence of that one in the house who had but so lately got a reprieve from a sudden death was utterly forgotten



except by Mrs. Cremlyn, who sent frequent messengers to see whether his door were shut, and to ask how he was. We had got used to Sunday company in Queen Square; but there it consisted chiefly of two or three of the Colonel's old cronies. They seldom had regular parties; and when they did, we were excused: besides, there being no young people there, we were not expected to join in the conversation. But here there seemed no way out of it; and this was to go on every Sunday.

"Oh, good Mr. Underwood," I thought, "what would you say to see us here?" And when I looked over to Annie, I saw that Walter had said something which had brought tears into her eyes, and caused her almost to choke over her food.

After the first glass, we ladies rose and retired, Mr. Cremlyn being very particular on that point; only the young men soon followed the young girls into the garden.

As for Annie and me, we retreated to our own room, where my young sister gave way to a passion of tears, crying out,—

"Oh, Judith, Judith! how can we be good in a place like this? If God loves us, why did He let us come?"

I could not answer her; for the same thought had been in my own mind every day since our arrival. Yet was I troubled at her words; for, of all the lessons impressed on our young minds by our good parents, there was none

which they had more laboured to instil than this, that, wherever our lot is cast, if it be one unsought by us, and plainly ordered by God, that lot must be the best for us, and in it we certainly can, with the help of His grace, serve Him.

I had argued with myself: "But Colonel Cooper ought not to have sent us here. Even he could not approve of the doings in this house; and should not have exposed us to such temptation." But still there always came the answer: "Probably he did not know everything. He was in a dilemma, and acted for the best, as he thought. At any rate, God suffered him so to act; and He does not suffer His children to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will, with every temptation, make a way to escape." Then back again came the old tormenting doubts: "Maybe I am not His child. Maybe I have slighted my religious privileges too long. He may have given me up, and left me to go my own way. *That* may be why I am sent here." And so in a dreadful gloom I remained all that afternoon. However, we had not been long in our room alone before the sound of little feet was heard outside, and a gentle tapping took Annie to the door, all tearful as she was, to see who was there.

It was little Molly, sent to inquire why we had run away, and to ask us to go down and see visitors who were with her mother.

I was lying upon a sort of couch which I had made for

myself between the window-seat and a couple of chairs, having a pillow under my head ; for I had a headache. So I said so, and asked the child to beg me off.

"Then may I come back and stay with you ? and will you tell me stories ?" asked the child. And then she stopped suddenly, and, kissing Annie, inquired why she was crying, and whether she were ill too.

"No, not ill," said Annie ; "but I cannot tell you now what is the matter. You may come back if you won't ask or tell Mistress Cremllyn ; and then I won't cry ; but I will tell you a nice story."

"Then I'm glad," said little Molly. And off she ran, but soon was back again, and sitting on the floor on Annie's lap, while she partly read and partly told, in her own words, the story of the three children in Babylon.

You know your aunt's peculiar gift for story-telling, my dear. Well, she had that talent from a child ; and I remember how, on this occasion, I could not but listen and feel so interested myself that I almost forgot my own trouble ; nor could I help wondering at her words, as, after telling all the circumstances with great vivacity, she went on to say,—

"You see, Molly dear, these good boys loved God very much ; and He loved them, though He did let them be taken away from their own dear country into a heathen place, where people pray to stupid idols made of stone ; and they managed to serve Him, too, and not to bow

down to the gods of the country. Only they were obliged to put up with being persecuted, and having most people unkind to them. I wonder if you and I would have been so brave if we had lived in those times."

And then I thought to myself that God certainly had not given Annie up ; and if not her, why me ? And so the gloom began to disperse.

But I am forgetting what I was going to tell you about. Dick.

Before we had been much more than an hour alone in our room, the old widow Dimsdale came to look for me, and to beg me to go and read a bit to Mr. Woodhouse ; and, as I was passing through the long gallery to his chamber, I heard the gentlemen come out of the dining-room, and call for their horses. The invalid heard them too ; and when I entered, he asked what day it was.

" Sunday, sir," I said.

" Aye, aye," he rejoined ; " and so they are all going to see the rustics play. There are merry sports here on all fine Sundays ; and Mr. Ralph has always played the good landlord, taking pleasure in seeing the tenants happy."

And then he seemed to go off into a long dream, much as I had seen him when first he was ill, talking to himself as if no one were near :

" There was plenty of playing and romping on the Sabbaths at Oakenhead. Yes ; I often heard talk of it ; but mother always kept me in. She would not let me go.

even to see the folks, because it was the *Sabbath* day, God's day, . . . speak their own words, . . . minding their own pleasure; or,—I can't remember it. Those things are gone from me now. Oh! what a happy boy I was!"

And then there was a great groan, and the sick man seemed for a minute to slumber; old Mother Dimsdale and I keeping quite still and motionless until he seemed himself again.

His pale, haggard face is still before me, as he opened his eyes and gazed wearily round the room, and at length perceiving me, said,—

"I want you to read to me."

Then I began, not any particular chapter, but those opening sentences which we have before our morning and evening services.

"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

"I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."

"Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities."

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

"Render your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil."

"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him: neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws which He set before us."

"O Lord, correct me, but with judgment: not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing."

"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

"Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

He did not look at my book, or perhaps he would have noticed that it was a smaller volume than usual; for it being Sunday I had happened to put my prayer-book in my pocket; so it was ready when it came into my head that these verses were just what he wanted.

How beautiful those gracious words seemed to me at that moment! And oh, how I hoped that this stricken sinner might see that they were meant for him, even him!

Slowly and deliberately I read them all, stealing a look

at his face as I proceeded ; but I could not understand its expression, or the changes that passed over it.

There was a pause of some minutes when I finished, and then he looked at me as if asking for more ; and I, not exactly knowing what to choose, began again that wondrous story of the returning prodigal, which had first interested him.

Still he spoke not, though we could see the water gather in his eyes ; and at last his aged nurse, as if unable any longer to restrain her feelings, sank on her knees, and with her thin long hands clasped together, and her dim eyes raised upwards, prayed in a voice of earnest entreaty :

"Almighty and most merciful Father ; *we* have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. *We* have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. *We* have offended against Thy holy laws. *We* have left undone those things which we ought to have done ; and *we* have done those things which we ought not to have done ; and there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent ; according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy name. Amen."

And, whether involuntarily or not, we could not tell, there followed a deep amen from the sick man's bed.

Well, our patient asked for no more reading that day, though he remained awake, and looked more like himself after that. And, after waiting a while, I went and sat by the window, to indulge my own thoughts.

"They will be back afore the supper be set, I warrant," remarked my aged companion. "Truly the daylight serveth not long now for man or beast. Methinketh they must ha' played by torch-light to-day; and the ride home, moreover, will be a dark one. Mayhap 'twill serve the better for some folks' ends. But, hark ye! They're coming even now. See ye not the twinkle of Isaac's lanthorn among yonder trees?"

"Yes," I said. "I see a light, good mother; but it is down very near the ground. I hear no sound of horses' hoofs, nor is that light borne by one who rides, I am assured."

"No," she said. "But doth not the light fall in forked and crooked fashion, as from a jagged and broken opening? And is there not a bluish look about it?"

"Yes, good mother," I said; "it is so."

"Then that is Isaac's lanthorn, and no other; for he broke the door of it last Candlemas, and put in a curious bit of glass that had fallen from the church window," she said; "and if any but Isaac himself carrieth that, there is something amiss, I say; for he is precious ower that same



light-carrier, and never giveth it to any other. Moreover, he wanteth it himself to-night to bring the master safely home."

"Hush! Mother Dimsdale," I said; for she was becoming quite excited. "Mr. Woodhouse—you forget he will hear."

"Aye, and so I did, my child," she answered; but watch that light, and see which way it goeth. Mayhap it may show anon the face of him who beareth it."

So I did as she bade me, though I could not understand why she seemed so excited about such a small matter.

It came nearer and nearer to the house, but not by the straight road; for now I could see it, and then again it disappeared among the bushes. Every now and then, too, it stopped as if he who had it carried also something which it was hard to get along; and then I could see that there were two men and a lad with the light, and one turned his face our way, but it was none that I had seen before; only the figures of the others I thought I knew, though where I had seen them I could not tell. At that moment, however, something seemed to have startled them; for they threw a cloth over the lanthorn, which almost hid the light.

It was the sound of horses' hoofs which they had heard; for the next minute we heard them too. There seemed to be several riders; and on they came apace, so that we could hear them speak, though we could not see them for the darkness.

Then we recognized the voices of Mr. Ralph Cremlyn and his friends, and soon heard the former say,—

“Young rascal that he is! if I do but catch him, he shall soon find out who is master here. At a cock-fight, too, in company with my stable lads! If I've told him once, I've told him fifty times, that no son of mine shall stay here if he can't be content with the society of his equals; and I'll tell him so no more. He may take himself off. So it was he who stole your lanthorn, Isaac; was it? that we might break our necks instead of catching him, I suppose.”

“Eh! and your fighting-cocks too, Isaac, I make no doubt; for there baint none like yours in all the country round,” murmured the old woman, angrily. “But it's a shame to be ruining your young master with your tales, just to please some folks whom I could name. And you know it will break the mistress's heart if he is sent away.”

They were close under the window now; but suddenly they had ceased speaking, for some of them seemed to have spied the light in the bushes. In a moment there was a rush to that spot, and then we saw the lanthorn uncovered, and raised so as to throw a light all round. Some one also found a basket, and before long back they all came with their prizes. But Dick was off, and his companions too; nor was anything heard of them for some time to come.

to me, and we read together some of the new books which Mrs. Scott put into the box that followed us eight days after our arrival.

Mr. Woodhouse went away as soon as he was well ; and they said he had gone to some of his kin, who were very quiet people, and kept no company, because the doctor had told him that if he drank strong liquor again it would be at the peril of his life. He grew very silent as he recovered, and let no one know whether he read for himself out of his mother's old book or not. Indeed, his head wouldn't let him read much at all, only he loved to be read to up to the last. I think it might have been on my account that he went away so soon ; for I had got into sad disgrace with Mr. Ralph about that same reading only the day before.

I'll tell you how it was.

Mr. Woodhouse was lying on the sofa in the withdrawing-room looking weary and sad, and Mrs. Cremlyn, who had been trying in vain to cheer him with all sorts of gossip which she had a notion would drive away the gloomy thoughts, at last sent for me, to see what the Book would do.

She didn't listen herself, but said she would take the time to write a letter to her sister ; and I had got nearly through the First Epistle of St. John, when in walked the master of the house in his riding boots, all hot and dusty, but in great spirits, because news had come down from town that a motion in the House had gone against Sir

Robert Walpole ; and he hated Sir Robert Walpole with all his heart.

But Mr. Woodhouse just then cared nothing for Sir Robert Walpole, or Bubb Doddington, or any of the other folks whose names were quite household words in those days, and he was still too weak to bear all the talk that Mr. Cremlyn thought he could. So, seeing my Bible in my hand, he cried out, " I'll tell you what it is, Woodhouse, you've had enough of this gloomy stuff. This girl will be the death of you. We won't have any more of it."

And then turning to me with an oath, he said,—

"There, young lady, take away those old fables, and come to the library for something more fit to read to a sick man."

Horror-struck, I hesitated, and turned to our patient, in the hope that he would speak ; but, though he looked greatly troubled, and pressed his hand to his forehead, no word came from his lips.

So, taking up my dear Bible, I carried it to my own chamber, while I heard Mr. Cremlyn stalk out of the room, and call loudly for Cicely, who very soon appeared at my door with a volume in her hand, and a message to the effect that her father would not give me the trouble of fetching it, but that that was the book that he wished read to his friend. Now, I had once requested to be taken to the library, in order to find a book, before ours came, and knew that, with the exception of a few old numbers of the *Craftsman* and of the *Gentleman's Maga-*

*zine*, it contained nothing but volumes of drinking or hunting songs, and some half-dozen novels. I don't remember the authors' names of any of the latter, only I know that they were not by Fielding, or Smollett, or Richardson, but were of an older date than any of these, and certainly, from what I saw in turning them over, I should say not of a more moral tendency. In disgust had I laid them down myself, after looking at a page or two; and now I sickened at the bare idea of reading any of them aloud to a sick man, more especially in the place of the Bible. And yet, what was I to do? I was in a family to which I had been sent by my guardian, and was certainly bound, as far as I could, to meet the wishes of the head of it.

Only, in this matter, could I? Then, as Cicely stood there, with the book in her hand, I thought first of the old nurse's reminder, that "We must obey God rather than man," and next of good Mr. Underwood's letter, which I had read so many times, and twice since I came there, and of what he said of such tales as these, and how they ought to make any modest woman blush. And it came to my mind that now was a moment when I must make my choice, and let it be known what I was, and whose I would be.

These thoughts came quick and fast; and while Cicely looked at me, and wondered why I hesitated, my heart went up in prayer; and then I said,—

"I am very sorry, but I cannot oblige your father in this matter; pray ask him to excuse me. I will do anything else that I can to please him."

She stared, and asked me why not; and when I told her, which I did rather timidly, she broke into a scornful laugh, and spoke as *she* had never spoken before—for Cicely and I had been on very good terms—and ran off to deliver my message.

Such a storm it awoke, you cannot imagine! I had to meet it at dinner-time in a loud lecture on my conceit from Mr. Cremlyn, in coldness from his wife, and in bitter taunts and sarcasm from Sally and Cicely, until I was obliged to leave the room in tears, which I could not restrain.

Now I was in a plight! And, unfortunately, the affair was made worse by the warmth with which, in my absence, Annie was provoked to speak on my behalf. She followed me as soon as the cloth was removed, her cheeks burning with indignation; and when I questioned her, I found that she really had said some very improper things in the heat of her passion, so that I had to insist on her making an apology. It took me an hour or more, however, to persuade her to do this, and after all, when the poor child went tremblingly down to acknowledge her fault, and beg for forgiveness, she was met by more taunts, and was told that neither she nor I need think of being forgiven; that we were a couple of rude, ungrateful girls,

whose behaviour just showed how much good came of people's setting up to be better than their neighbours.

You may imagine that we did not venture down again that night, and, as no one took the trouble to come near us, we went supperless to bed, after I had solaced myself by writing a long letter to Mrs. Scott, which letter, however, I never sent.

Next morning, not knowing what else to do, we ventured down, and were somewhat astonished at being received only with chilling coldness on the part of the elders, though the young ladies behaved much as they had done on the preceding day. Afterwards little Molly came from Mr. Woodhouse to say that he was just leaving, and would wish to bid me good-bye; and, as we went along to the dining-room to find him, she told me that she had heard her mother tell how he had begged that, for his sake, the affair might be overlooked.

Mistress Betty Rogers came to stay with us soon afterwards. She was Molly's god-mother, and a single sister of Mrs. Cremlyn's. On the whole, we rather took to her; for, though she was somewhat old-maidish and fidgety in her ways, she was generally kind to us; and, besides, had much more proper notions about the bringing up of young people than either Mr. or Mrs. Ralph Cremlyn, on which account, I believe, she was not a very frequent visitor at the house, though, being a lady possessed of a considerable fortune, it was not considered prudent wholly

to neglect her. Her presence acted as some little restraint on all the young people ; for, as she always brought with her some handsome presents, they rather wished to get into her good graces ; nevertheless the elder girls soon became weary of having to accompany her in her daily walks, and were glad to turn her over to us. But Molly generally came too ; for Molly and Annie had already become great friends. Nor was the old lady slow to perceive the good influence which my little sister was exercising over her young god-daughter, especially in the matter of her behaviour to her mother. Indeed, I verily believe that Annie's little lectures saved Molly many a severe one from her aunt ; for, as she said to me, though she knew by experience that it was useless to speak to the others, she felt it her duty to interfere in Molly's case ; and I remarked that, whenever she had an opportunity, she was constantly warning the child against following her sisters' examples, telling her that in her young days any girl would have been beaten black and blue who had dared to speak as Sally did to her elders.

I must tell you of one walk that we took with Mistress Betty ; for I shall never forget it. Walter had a half-holiday, and, somewhat to my surprise, he insisted on taking us all to visit an old ruin, at about two miles' distance, where, as he declared, we should see some white owls. There was a twinkle in his eye which rather alarmed me ; for I had had some experience already of his



tricks ; but, as his aunt consented, I did not like to say anything. It was a bright and rather frosty morning—a capital one for walking, as she observed—yet it certainly seemed to us ladies that we had gone a full three miles, instead of two, before we came in sight of these said ruins.

They were situated on an open heath, but close to our market town ; nevertheless we were somewhat surprised, as we approached them, to find so many people round the spot ; and the boy pretended to be so too, though I don't think he was.

He went from one to another of the rabble, for such it rapidly became ; inquiring what was the matter, and to some of them he talked rather long, but always came back to us declaring that he couldn't make it out ; that they talked about a mad dog, and that it was rushing about the country, and had passed that way once or twice, but that no one could catch it. You may fancy that we were rather alarmed ; but, of course, Walter only laughed at our fears, and urged that, now we were there, we must stay and see the fun ; that it wasn't every day we could see a mad dog caught ; that they said it was being driven in that direction ; and that if we went either on or back we might meet it alone, which wouldn't be so pleasant. At last he persuaded us to get just inside a part of the ruin, and placed himself at the entrance, with a great bough in his hand, that would, he declared, frighten any dog, sane or insane.

Well, I suppose we were there for more than half an hour without anything happening, except that the crowd became larger and larger, and that the people fell more and more into a great ring.

At length there was a cry in the crowd of "There he comes! there he is! A fine fellow, isn't he? He'll make a good fight of it, I warrant you."

And, looking in the direction to which the people turned, we saw an enormous bull, gaily bedecked with ribbons, and led along by a strong cord, which was attached to a sort of collar round his neck. As he approached us, the people cheered more and more, and Walter cheered with the rest, and looked at us and chuckled.

"Oh, let us go, let us go!" cried Mrs. Betty. "It is no mad dog at all. They have taken you in, Walter."

"And a very good take in, if they have," cried the boy, rubbing his hands. "We shall see some sport to-day. How can we go? We couldn't get through this crowd. You had best stay quiet, Aunt Rogers."

Indeed, there was no help for it; for by this time the gigantic creature was fixed by the cord to an iron ring in the ground, and the managers of the sport were forcing the people further and further back; so that we were quite shut in.

And now, from the opposite side to that by which the bull had made his appearance, we saw three men, each

leading a fierce, savage-looking dog. These creatures seemed to know what was going to happen, if their majestic adversary did not; for, while he was calmly pawing the ground, and composedly eyeing the crowd, they were all impatient to begin the combat, barking furiously, and looking about everywhere for their opponent.

The animals were next brought face to face, and allowed time, as it were, to measure their strength before the attack began; and, that done, one dog, the smallest of the three, was unloosed, and as the people shouted "At him!" the savage brute flew barking right in the bull's face. Of course he was received with the scorn which his impudence merited, and quietly tossed away to some considerable distance, and then the bull turned to attend to the second of his adversaries, who, as soon as he was unloosed, sprang on him in the rear, and seemed determined to jump on his back. It took longer to dispose of him; but in a few minutes he was howling off to recover himself, and licking one of his paws, on which the bull seemed to have set his foot. Then up came the third, which was the largest and most daring of the three. He seemed to attack on all sides, and had wounded his enemy in several parts, so as to cause blood to flow, before he was driven back.

By this time the bull was getting irritated, and tugged and pulled at his rope, striving to get free to rush after

the disturber of his peace, which irritation the people observed with satisfaction, and strove to increase by pelting him with small stones, and throwing dust in his eyes. But the managers stopped that proceeding as soon as they discovered it, declaring that they would have fair play, and not have the sport spoiled.

Each dog, as he was driven off, had been secured by the keepers, and they were held off until both the bull and they had had a moment's time to breathe. Then all three were let loose at once, and with redoubled fury they rushed to renew the combat, one springing at the head, another at the flanks, and the third at the belly or heels of the poor beast, until he was thoroughly infuriated, and covered with wounds. How he tugged at the rope, and rushed furiously about, bellowing so that he must have been heard all round the country, I shall never forget, any more than I shall the savage delight of the spectators.

We thought every moment that the rope would snap, or the ring be torn out of the ground. But whilst we were looking for that to happen, another accident, which proved almost as serious in its results, occurred.

Some one present had with him a dog of the same breed as these, that he appeared to prize very highly. He had been urged by the bystanders to let it loose to assist in tormenting the poor bull; but it was not until the creature seemed altogether in the power of the other dogs

that he would consent. He did so just as the others, half spent and bleeding, were slightly relaxing their efforts, and at the first onset Gip was received by the bull on his horns, and flung to an immense distance. For an instant we thought he was dead, and some of the folks in great concern were bending over him, when he recovered, and was about to return to the charge, when his master came up, and cried, "No, Gip, no; lie down, sir;" vainly imagining that the creature would remember his duty in such a moment as that. Of course, his orders were utterly vain; the beast was mad with rage and pain; and fight he would. So, as the people, at his master's earnest request, fell on him to tug him away from the bull, he turned on them, biting several of them severely, and causing the others to take to their heels. Several ran one way, and the dog after them; so that Walter, who was close to the entrance, came in for a bad bite on his leg.

Meanwhile, however, the bull was secured; for several men, seeing the great danger of his making his escape, had first thrown ropes round his neck, one each way; so that by the united strength of two or three men on each side, he could be pulled in opposite directions, and kept from turning on any of them; and then tearing the iron ring out of the ground, they led him away, and calling off the dogs, left us and the crowd in general to make the best of the opportunity of getting home.

But the people did not disperse quickly on account of the number of wounded persons who had to be attended to; and as I stood now at the entrance considering what we were to do to procure assistance for Walter, who was in great pain, and not by any means making the least of it, I heard some one speak of what I thought was another entertainment yet to come off, and ask whether any of them had seen the notice of what was to happen after the bull-baiting was finished.

I could not hear distinctly what any one said, but I observed by their gestures that when they were told of it, nearly every one made up his mind to stay where he was. At the same time I beheld multitudes of other people, men, women, and children, coming over the hills, and across the fields, and all drawing round where we were; so that soon once more we were imprisoned, and whatever was going to be performed, I saw we must witness the doing of it.

"Walter, Walter," I cried, turning back into the ruin, where he was sitting on a stone, while his aunt was bathing his leg as best she could, with her handkerchief dipped in a little drop of water which Annie kept fetching from a small pool behind, in a large oyster-shell that she had picked up; "Walter, oh, Walter, do you know what is going to happen next? look at the people that are collecting now!"

And I stood back to let him look out.

"I know?" he answered crossly; "how should I?"

And this time I believed him.

"What is it, Judith?" inquired Mrs. Betty, coming forward curiously. "These people look quiet enough, though there are so many of them. I wonder——"

But she did not finish her sentence; for Walter called her back again, declaring that if his wound was not bound up, he should bleed to death.

"Very well," she said; "I thought it better to let it bleed a while; but now, Molly, give me your handkerchief. His own and yours and mine together will about do, I think."

So, quickly and cleverly it was bandaged up, Walter declaring all the while that it hurt dreadfully.

"I wish some one would get us a coach; for you cannot walk on that leg, my boy," his aunt said kindly.

"No hope of that just yet," growled Walter, hobbling to the entrance, and sitting down on a block of stone. "What can the fools be about? They must know that the baiting is over by now."

"I don't much think they are looking for anything of this kind," said his aunt. "Yet I confess I wish we were well away from here." And Mistress Betty primmed up her mouth, and put on rather a deprecatory air as she said to me, "Judith, my girl, I verily believe we are in for something worse than a bull-baiting, horrid as that was; but you can bear me witness that I am not answerable

for this. I knew no more of what was to take place on this spot to-day than the babe unborn."

"Of course you did not, good madam," I answered ; "but pray, what do you apprehend ?"

"Look there at that man on horseback coming down the slope on the west, and you will soon know," she answered sternly, and yet with an expression of curiosity in her countenance which she could not conceal.

I had been looking at that man, too, for some minutes, and so I now perceived were many other people.

On he came, slowly and deliberately, into the very midst of the throng, the people for the most part respectfully making way for him to pass, though a few uttered in my hearing gibes and sneers, and some cast things at him.

When he descended from his horse, some were ready to take charge of it ; and as a space was cleared in the midst very near to where the poor bull had been, I saw that some had placed a kind of desk there on a little elevation, and into that he mounted, and thence for a moment calmly surveyed the multitude. Oh ! what a living mass it was ! Thousands on thousands, I am sure, stood there, and to hear what ? Ah ! it was the living word, that word which is able to make wise unto salvation ; and my heart thrilled within me as I became conscious that one of those wonderful preachers of whom I had heard so much now stood before me.



He was a small and somewhat spare person, yet his appearance was masculine and muscular, betokening continual exercise. He had an aquiline nose, and most piercing eye ; and his hair was simply arranged in a few flowing locks, while all the rest of his dress was neat and plain. I do not remember at all whether he put on any gown before he began the service ; but I think not.

As he ascended the desk, Mrs. Betty said hastily,—

“ I think we had better put our fingers in our ears ; ” but as she did not set the example, we had none to follow, and kept ours out. Nor did she look at us again, but kept her eyes fixed on that one person whose very name had drawn such multitudes together.

“ Let us sing,” he said, in a loud, clear voice ; and then gave out the old hundredth psalm : “ All people that on earth do dwell.” Oh ! that singing ! how it rose, indeed, like the sound of many waters, and seemed to fill the air, making the rocks ring, and waking the echoes all around ! One does not often hear singing like that in a church, though sometimes since then I have.

It seemed to still and solemnize the people at once. And then followed a prayer, short, simple, and real, which one could not but feel was truly addressed to One unseen, but whose presence was felt, and without any thought of what the people would think of it.

There was an unbroken stillness during that prayer, which was the more surprising, as there could be no doubt

that many rough fellows who had come only to disturb were among the congregation.

And then came the sermon. I cannot tell you the text ; for, though I have often tried to recall it, the words are gone from me. But the intense earnestness, the manner in which the preacher spoke to the people, and seemed to make each one feel, whether he would or not, that a message had come to him, I remember well. It was like nothing I had known before. He told us that he had come to tell us plain truths, and that in plain words he would speak them ; and plainly indeed he did tell us of our sins, beginning with those that are gross and open, and going on to such as are more hidden and specious, until he had fully proved us all guilty before God, and all under His righteous condemnation ; and while he so spoke there were many who groaned aloud, and some who even fell down as if wounded to death. More than once I heard indignant exclamations from Mistress Betty, as he proceeded thus ; but I could not turn my head to look at her, being too entirely riveted by the sermon ; and at last she became quite silent.

"Repent, and believe the gospel," cried the preacher, at this point, "and bait the devil in your hearts, instead of poor, innocent beasts, that are God's creatures as much as ye." And then he seemed to fix his searching glance on one point in the crowd where stood a youth with hand upraised and clenched fist. It had been so from the be-

ginning, and now perhaps was kept in that posture by the pressure of the people; for he neither threw what his hand held, nor let his arm fall.

I shall never forget, nor perhaps will that young man, how lovingly, after thus laying bare the evil of our hearts, the preacher declared that it was not to condemn sinners that he was sent, but rather to say, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" and that he knew well how many thought themselves so past recovery that they went on in evil because they believed themselves beyond all turning.

And then the picture he drew of the misery of such persons while they persisted in following that evil way, still looking all the time at that young man, whose back was towards us,—I can't forget it either. At length he came to the winding up, to the setting forth of the gospel itself, and of Christ, the only hope of sinners, and urged that none were too bad to go to Him. Then he spoke so lovingly and sweetly till there came a beam of light over many a face, which before had gathered blackness as he spoke; and tears of joy rained down many a once hardened countenance.

It came to an end too soon—that blessed sermon—and then some went slowly off in the direction of their homes, while many others remained to pour out their sorrows in the preacher's ear, and to ask over and over again, perhaps: "Can there be mercy for such as I?"

Why, I know not, but my eyes were fastened still,

even while they were dispersing on that part of the press where the youth stood. It had never entered my head who he was, or probably I should have looked any other way.

He turned, too, at last; but it was as though all directions were alike for him; and, as he slowly got down off something on which he had been mounted, he looked for a minute in our direction. It was Dick. We all saw him, and he saw us; but as we recognized each other he plunged into the departing crowd, and went we knew not whither.

But even this glimpse of the banished youth did not make us talk much as we walked home. As for me, my heart was full; and I would have liked to discourse with some one about that sermon. Mrs. Betty, however, was a person of whom we all stood somewhat in awe. I had expected a great burst of vehement indignation from her as soon as the service was over; for at first she seemed exceedingly angry at being made out only a vile, miserable sinner like the rest; but she was very silent now, and did not seem inclined to talk at all. Nor when I looked in her face could I make out what she thought about it; for at one moment she looked vexed and irritated, and then again puzzled or intensely distressed.

Neither did Walter make any remark. Curiosity, no doubt, at first made him listen, and then the novelty to him of the message; but, however it was, he never moved

the whole time ; and as for his pain, he seemed to forget all about it ; but when it was over, he said nothing.

Then the children. They had perched themselves in niches close to me, and I could hear their half-suppressed sobs, and feel their warm tears on my shoulder ; but that reserved and stately presence hushed up every expression of feeling, even in a little child. So as soon as a litter could be procured, we all started homewards ; and until I reached our own chamber I knew nothing of any one's thoughts but my own, though that we all thought a great deal our deep silence testified.

## CHAPTER XV.

WELL, it was the very day after all this happened that an event occurred which changed the course of our lives again. We had often heard of Squire Cremlyn, of Briarhurst Park, the elder brother, and head of the house, during our residence at Woodberry Lodge; but we had never yet seen him nor any of his family. In fact, we found that there was but little intercourse between the two families, notwithstanding that the brothers had married sisters, and that their houses were but a few miles apart. But on this day the Squire and his lady called; and though their visit was chiefly to their sister, Mrs. Betty, they were prevailed on to remain to dinner. And thus they came to see Annie and me. Perhaps also Mrs. Betty may have said something about us beforehand. Indeed, I rather think she had; because they both noticed us so kindly, and the Squire was so scrupulously deferential in his manner to me, that I went up several steps in my own estimation.

Then, after dinner, they stepped out to walk in the

garden with Mrs. Betty; and, meeting me in the hall, politely invited me to accompany them. It is very pleasant to find a fellow-creature who cares to speak to one after being treated with the neglect and contempt which we had had to bear ever since that novel-reading business; and I freely confess to having enjoyed that afternoon's gossip about London, and the people and things we had seen there, immensely. Nor were the praises of my little sister, nor the civil speeches made to myself, by any means disagreeable to me. You may be sure therefore that when, before they left that afternoon, they gave us an invitation to accompany Mrs. Betty on a visit which she was about to make to them, and to remain until such time as Colonel and Mrs. Cooper returned home, I only hesitated on the score that perhaps we should do wrong to move without our guardian's leave.

That difficulty, however, the Squire overruled by saying that, his brother having consented—as no doubt he did most willingly—to give us up, he should write to the Colonel himself; and Madam Cremlyn added pleasantly,—

“You know, we are connections of yours, Mistress Judith; for my mother was your grandmother's cousin by marriage, and therefore we are a little bit inclined to be offended that we were not first honoured with your company.”

My heart gave a bound when it was finally settled that on the very next day—by which time Mrs. Betty would have

finished her packing—the coach would return for us; and Annie was made quite happy when little Molly came running in with great glee to tell us that her godmother had got her father to promise that she might go also;—the two little girls had grown so fond of each other.

There was only one person now whom we regretted leaving—the old widow Dimsdale; and early next morning we ran down to bid her good-bye.

“Eh! poor lambs!” she said when we told her our errand, “and ye’ll be better off at the Square’s, na doubt, na doubt. So it beant for me to be making moan, though I’ll miss you sore, I will, and the precious crumbs o’ the Word you brought me. But it’s the Shepherd’s doing, na doubt on’t; He’s a leading you on; and He’ll lead me too, yea, e’en beside the still waters,—or if not by them, alongside a’ times o’ such an o’erbrimming stream as ’al give me a drink as ’al last a time.”

“What do you mean by that sort of stream, good mother?” Annie asked with a puzzled look.

“And beant it such as that,” she cried, “when one o’ our very own church ministers goes a looking after the poor lost sheep, as Mr. Wesley did the t’other day?”

“Was that Mr. Wesley?” I exclaimed; “and did you know of it, Mother Dimsdale?”

“Aye, indeed, and war there, too, Mistress Judith,” she said. “’Twar the talk o’ the country, war that sermon, afore and since too. And to think o’ a voice like that



going all through the land, it causeth my heart to leap for joy."

Oh! it was nice to speak with one who had heard that preaching, and been gladdened by it, too; for it was ever hard to me to keep silent when the heart was full. And with the exception of some sneers from Mr. Ralph and his daughters, who had heard rumours of it, I had known no one of the family mention the subject, except little Molly, who innocently went and told her mother; but she did not get much encouragement to talk about it.

At two o'clock, Mr. Edmund, the eldest son, brought the coach over for us, and we bid good-bye to that strange, disorderly family where we had spent many miserable weeks, to become the guests in a house where nothing ever seemed out of its place, and where nobody ever appeared to misbehave themselves.

It would be hard to imagine a more dignified, stately gentleman than was Squire Cremlyn, nor a more particular lady than his wife; and then they pulled together, and lived for the same objects, instead of leading two separate lives, as the other Cremlyns did. So perhaps it was not very surprising that they had got, not only their household, but the village in which—as all the people were their tenants—they really reigned like a king and queen, into such an excellent condition.

It was dusk when we drove through it this first time, just the very time when half the population of the other

villages would have been turning out for all sorts of riot and drunkenness ; but Briarhurst was quite quiet ; and the only sounds we heard were those of the labourer singing as he passed along to his home, or of the shutting of the few little shops, and other preparations for closing the work of the day, and getting in to the cheerful domestic hearths.

Mr. Edmund, who had just returned from his travels, and whom we had found a most entertaining companion all through the drive, now began to point out some of the many improvements which his father had made since he came to the estate.

"That row of cottages was falling into ruins," he said ; "they have been thoroughly put into order, and you will admire them when you see them by daylight, aunt."

Then we passed a larger building, with a clock in front, and a small belfry.

"See those schools," he cried ; "they are the only parish schools in these parts. You know, they have nothing but a dame-school near uncle's place and in most of the villages round. My mother and sisters are often there : they take a great pride in them."

And then we came to where we could just get a peep of the church ; and again he said,—

"Ah ! aunt, I must take you to look at the improvements that we have been making in the church, to-morrow. You would hardly know it again."

How different to Dick ! One could hardly imagine

that the two young men were first-cousins ; but the bringing-up makes such a difference !

So we spent many weeks under that hospitable roof ; and very different they were to the weeks which we had spent at Mr. Ralph's. It was close upon Christmas when we began our visit, and most of the household were very busy ; for there were grand doings there at that time of the year. Besides, the youngest daughter was expected home from school. She was fifteen, had finished her schooling, and was leaving with lots of prizes ; so now she was to have a chamber of her own, and was to be called Mistress Jane,—the new-fangled Miss not having reached those parts.

Thomas, the second son, had already arrived from Oxford ; and Hugh, the schoolboy, was coming the same day as Jane. So the family were all excitement ; and, as the Squire said, they should count it a right jovial Christmas, with so many young ones to make merry together. But there was plenty of work besides preparing for those of the family, Christmas being a merry time for every one on the Squire's estate.

On that day the spacious old hall was always used, and dinner laid there for as many of the tenantry as it would hold ; so it was undergoing a wondrous cleaning and polishing ; and every day that week we all found something to do, either in it or in the kitchen, where all sorts of capital viands were making ready.

I enjoyed that week. It was a very happy one,—what with the new arrivals, the affectionate greetings, the thought of the pleasure that was making ready for so many people, and the joy of being able to help good Madam Cremlyn, who was so careful for others, and so anxious to make every one happy that she was sometimes in danger of falling ill herself, and spoiling all.

How we all chopped away at the suet and meat and sweets for the puddings, or laboured at the kneading together of the vast heaps of things when they were chopped enough! How anxiously we looked after the enormous joints of beef and the hams and the bacon, to make sure that all were in perfect order, leaving nothing for servants to settle, though they had to keep hard and close to it under us! And how we rubbed away at polished oak tables, while the domestics did the floors, I shall never forget. And then nobody got rude or cross (though once Hugh did get into sad disgrace for addressing his mother without a title); nobody,—that is, except little Molly, who could not all at once mend her manners, and one day pouted a good deal, and told the cook that she was a nasty cross old woman, because she would not give her as large a slice of cheese as Master Thomas had when he came in hungry from the chase. For that offence the little creature was very near being sent to her room for the rest of the day when the Squire heard of it; but Annie begged her off with so many tears that she was

forgiven and released, with an exhortation never so to offend again.

And then the decorations; I must not forget about them. We had banners and scrolls without end; and such boughs of holly covered with red berries as you never saw, besides the bunch of mistletoe over the door by which the maids entered.

The old butler, who had lived in the family for more than half a century, told us wonderful tales of the olden times, and what was done in that very hall by those very old people whose portraits hung against the wall, while we were all so busy, and he helping us.

He prided himself extraordinarily on being in the service of so ancient a house, and of being always about premises where once little boys acted turnspits, and were rewarded with a lick of the dripping-pan for their pains; where there were once no chimneys, only a hole in the roof to let out, not only the smoke from the fire which blazed in the middle of the room, but, as historians say, all the accumulated odours of viands, of human beings of every description, men at arms, footmen, serving men, minstrels, wandering friars, devotees under vows against clean linen, mendicants swarming with vermin, and of all the untold filth on the floor which was covered down with layers of rushes, and seldom swept away. It was hard to believe him; but he declared that so folks lived there in ancient times, and that he knew for a fact,—and

Mr. Edmund confirmed the truth of it,—that when part of that house was built, which it was in the time of the Plantagenets, separate chambers were very rare; so that it was most likely that most of those grand knights and ladies, with their horseboys and scullions, all littered down at nights in one common dormitory, as if they were little better than wild beasts. So it seems pretty plain that the very tradespeople of our day, who are so despised by the gentry, live much more like real ladies and gentlemen than the grandest folks of those old days.

But we had not only to get ready for our own and the tenants' dinner. There was the treat for the school-children in their school to be thought of too; so that really we had enough to do.

At last Christmas Day came. It was a fine one, rather frosty, but not very bitterly cold; and we were all up early to put the finishing strokes to our work before it was time for church. The bells had been ringing merrily almost from dawn; but at ten o'clock they began a fresh peal. A few minutes before the half-hour we all set out, the Squire and Madam Cremlyn leading the way, and we young ones following in procession,—Mr. Edmund leading me; Mr. Thomas his eldest sister, Mistress Ann; Hugh with Mistress Jane; and Annie and Molly bringing up the rear.

As we walked along, those of the villagers who had not gone early, fell into a line behind us; and if at any

door the Squire caught sight of any one not ready, or making ready, he never failed to stop and admonish them.

At the church door the Squire was met by the church-wardens and beadles, and so passed up the aisle until they came near the desk, at which point they stopped until the parson and squire should have saluted each other, which they did with great gravity.

After that the service proceeded ; and it was pleasant to see how well the congregation behaved, and how they joined in the responses and singing. I remember that there was a band of men with fifes and fiddles, and other wind and stringed instruments in the gallery, who had taken great pains to prepare for this occasion ; nevertheless, the people were so well instructed that they would join in also.

Indeed, the Squire took care that they should, and sent frequent messages to any whom he saw inattentive, or who had not found their places in their books, or who were looking about them.

It was a very solemn-looking clergyman who read the prayers and preached ; and he carefully kept to one tone of voice, I suppose lest he should be suspected of lightness or frivolity. Anyhow it was nice to see people so serious ; and though the sermon was rather dry, I found that the people could understand it, and that some of the servants brought home a great deal of it, which made me

the more ashamed that I could not. However, as he had been several years rector of the parish, of course they knew his sermons better than I did. I learnt afterwards that he was a very learned man, and had taken high honours at his college; on which account his parishioners were very proud of him. Besides that, and better still, they said that no one ever could say that he had been seen in the least the worst for drink, or conducting himself in a manner unsuitable in a clergyman; but that he was always ready to visit the sick, or for any other duty. So the Squire might well boast of him as a pattern to all the parsons round, and say that there were none worthy to keep company with him.

After the service we all went to the school to see the children feast, and so home to dinner, the Squire entering the hall first, with his lady on his arm, and his children and the other guests following as nearly in order of rank as possible. But in that matter there was a great deal of polite contention, at least among the higher class of guests, almost each man declining to take the place appointed for him, and protesting that he was put up too high, and that some one else ought to sit above him; until it really seemed as if the dinner would be all cold before the company could be got to sit down. However, at last that business was settled after a vast deal more fuss and ceremony than I ever saw used in London; and then the Squire called on the parson to say grace, which



he did with a loud voice ; after which the covers were removed, and we fell to work.

The first dish was a boar's head with a lemon in its mouth. You may be surprised at that ; but the Squire loved old fashions, and this was one which had been handed down in his family for generation after generation ; and he would not drop it.

Below, we had sirloins of beef, turkeys, and hams without number ; and many were the compliments which the ladies got on the curing of their hams and on their puddings. But I could not tell you all the dishes ; for the tables literally groaned under the good cheer. Of course, strong ale went freely round ; and there were toasts in plenty,—toasts for King George, and confusion to the Pretender ; toasts for the Church, for the ladies, and, above all, for their good host.

Still, as all knew that they were expected to leave the table in possession of their senses, the men were careful what they did, and very wisely asked to have the hall cleared for dancing soon after the ladies had left.

When all was ready, of course we were called back to witness the merriment, and indeed to take part in it ; for both the Squire and his wife, as well as his sons and daughters, mingled with the dancers ; and before I could say yes or no, I found myself whirled away by Mr. Edmund, though I protested all the while that I knew not a step. It made me very hot ; and I confess to

being a good deal vexed, which he perceiving, and attributing my reluctance to some feeling which he supposed I might have against taking any part in such gaieties in a mourning garb—for as yet we had but slightly changed our dress—did not press me again ; so I was left to look on, a silent spectator, until the dancing was finished, and the carols began.

That part of the entertainment we heartily enjoyed ; for many of them were very pretty, and moreover they seemed more appropriate to the day than anything since the service ; aye, more like the Christmas before last, when we were with our pastor and his poor people at Mayfield, and when we finished our feast with Christmas hymns and carols, though all through the time he had kept us mindful of the cause of all our Christmas joy, and spoken many a sweet word of hopeful onward-looking to the joyful time when all our Christmases shall end in an advent of eternal joy.

## CHAPTER XVI.

"AUNT BETTY," said little Molly one day, when that good lady happened to be sitting with us in the library during the children's play hours, and all the others were out, "Aunt Betty, I should so like to ask you a question, only I am afraid if I do you will call me a naughty girl."

"Then I advise you not to ask it, my dear," replied Mrs. Betty, in a tone which evidently encouraged the child to go on. In fact, she was growing daily more and more fond of her little god-daughter, and allowed her to take many liberties which surprised me, considering the strictness of her notions regarding the bringing-up of children.

"But it's about something that I want to know so very, very much," pleaded Molly; "and I don't want to be a naughty girl, only I want to know."

"Well, Molly," said her aunt, "then you had better tell me what it is, and I will tell you whether it is a proper question or not."

"But you won't scold me or send me to bed?" per-

sisted the child ; "because I don't mean to be a naughty girl, if I am one."

"No, Molly ; when I bid you ask a question, I won't punish you for asking it," Mrs. Betty said decidedly.

"It's about something that Annie and I have often talked about then, aunt," the child went on, as if it were a relief to her to make this confession ; "and it's about sermons."

"Sermons," repeated Mrs. Betty, looking somewhat amused. "What can children like you want to know about them? All you have got to do is to listen to them."

"Yes, aunt," returned Molly, nodding her head. "Listen and learn ; that is what Cousin Hugh always says when he's explaining anything to us. But, you see, sometimes when I do listen to Mr. Fordham I can't understand one word he says ; and sometimes I only understand just what I knew before ; and sometimes I forget to listen, and think of lots and lots of things. I don't mean to, aunt ; but the other thoughts come, and I understand them, and they are about things I like ; and it's so hard to listen when you don't know one word about it."

"Well, Molly," said her aunt, smiling ; "but you haven't asked your question yet. What is it that you want to know?"

"Aunt," said the child earnestly, "I heard a sermon

once; and you heard it too. It wasn't like other sermons one bit. There were lots of it that I could understand—I know some of it now; and oh, I liked it so much, so very much. It made me cry, too; and yet I liked listening. Aunt, it was that sermon out of doors; didn't you like it too?"

"Is that your question, Molly?" inquired her aunt, colouring a little, and glancing nervously at me.

"No, aunt, it isn't, only I wanted to know," urged Molly. "Do tell me if you liked it."

"Little girls should not be inquisitive," replied Mrs. Betty, rather sternly. "I don't talk about liking or disliking sermons; I listen because its proper; and that's what little girls should do."

Molly's countenance fell directly, and her lip quivered as if she were about to cry.

"Well, Molly, I'm waiting for your question," said her aunt after a minute's pause.

"I wanted to know why I could understand such a lot of Mr. Wesley's sermon, when I can hardly make myself listen to Mr. Fordham at all," replied the little girl timidly; and then plucking up her courage, she added, "Annie says that at Mayfield they always had sermons that had some little bits in for her, and that they helped her to be good. I wish Mr. Fordham would put some bits in for me; because I do want to be a good girl, really I do, aunt; and I can't help thinking about it."

"Well, Molly, every one can be good if they try, you know; and if you go on listening every Sunday, you will understand more some day when you are cleverer than you are now. Mr. Fordham is a very clever man, you know; so it is not likely that little girls can understand him. Suppose you go now, and have a run in the garden before dinner, instead of puzzling your head over things that are above you."

And so, kissing the child, she dismissed her and Annie, and then taking her knotting out of her bag, began to work industriously.

I was at work, too, and did not venture to continue the subject, although my heart was as full of it as little Molly's.

On she went, knot, knot, knot for some time; but somehow the work did not seem to prosper. At least, she frowned over it a great deal, and continually exclaimed, "How stupid I am! Any one who saw me now would say *I* was not paying attention, I'm afraid."

"Does she *mean* me to refer to Molly's difficulty?" I thought; but still I said nothing.

"That is a curious little thing; isn't she, Judith?" she remarked at last, as if no longer able to restrain herself.

"Yes, madam," I said, "and a very dear little thing too: I am very fond of her."

"But she seems to have such curious thoughts, Judith."

she pursued. "Who would have dreamt of a child of her age comparing one sermon with another, and being so anxious to understand? I am sure I don't think that many grown people trouble about that. Did you ever know a child like her?"

"Annie has a little friend at school, who is something like her, ma'am," I said. "She does not talk about sermons, certainly; for I don't suppose she ever heard one likely to interest her; but I have discovered lately, that when they are alone or walking together, they often talk about such things as one expects sermons to be about."

"And, pray, what may they be, Mistress Judith?" she asked, with a slight curl of her lip.

"Mr. Underwood used to say that it was always his business to preach about sin and salvation in one way or another, and that when he wandered to anything else he knew that he was not minding his own business," I answered.

"But Mr. Underwood is not everybody," she returned, somewhat sharply; "and other people may have different ideas."

I was silent, not knowing what to reply; but that did not seem to be what she intended; for she went on to remark something to the effect that "such topics as those were all very well for ignorant people, and such as had led bad lives; but that she could not see what they had to

do with respectable folks who did their best, and of whom, therefore, nothing more could be expected."

"But, dear madam," I said, "is there any one in such a position?"

"I should hope so," she answered, drawing herself up; "at least, I know that I have always tried to do my duty to my neighbours, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have done it."

What was I to say in answer to such a statement from one so much older than myself? At that moment I remember wishing that I could exchange ages with her! However, the very feeling of weakness caused me to lift up my heart, and cry for strength and wisdom to say the right words. And I was the more anxious about this because there was something in the good lady's manner that convinced me that she was not quite so easy about her condition as she tried to persuade herself.

"Mr. Under—" I began, but checked myself instantly.

"Well, what did Mr. Underwood say about it?" she answered, resuming her former gracious manner. "I suppose, after all, it is natural that you should think a good deal of his opinion, having been brought up under him. Let us hear what he said about it."

"He used often to tell us that, in estimating our state before God, we should always remember that there are two great commandments according to our



Saviour's teaching; that the first inculcates perfect love to God; and the second, perfect love to man. And I remember, ma'am, that he often used to warn us not to put the second before the first, nor begin by examining ourselves in that. I thought of what he used to say so much on Sunday when Annie was reading that twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew, and little Molly stopped her to ask whether *every* one really ought to love God with *all* the heart, every bit of it, and never leave off loving Him at all; and when Annie answered, 'Yes,' she asked again, 'What would happen to us if we didn't?'

"And what did the child answer?" asked Mrs. Betty.

So I told her that I had heard her repeat those words which St. Paul quoted to the Galatians, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," which troubled little Molly very much, because she said "she knew that often she hadn't loved God even so well as her doll, or her pet kitten, or many other things."

"Your sister is a little Puritan," cried Mrs. Betty at this. "She must not be allowed to make my niece miserable."

And then I, fearing that there would be a stop put to the intercourse of the two children, explained that Annie had no intention of making her miserable, and that she had only answered as she had been taught to answer at

the catechising in church, showing how, as St. Paul says, "The law concludes us all under sin."

As far as I remember she did not say more about the children, but somehow led the conversation to Mr. Wesley's sermon, which had evidently struck her as something remarkable, and had remained in her mind, so that she could not forget it. She expressed her satisfaction on the whole that Dick had heard it, and said it was just suited to such as he; and though she could not reconcile herself to a clergyman going about preaching in other men's parishes, yet she fully admitted that many other ministers shamefully neglected their sacred charges, and that Mr. Henry Cremlyn especially excited her deep indignation. But then, Mr. Wesley often wanted to preach, she said, where the clergy cared for their flocks even as well as Mr. Fordham did. Why couldn't he take a parish himself—as she had heard he might have done—and be content to keep that in order, instead of roaming all over the land, and preaching on heaths and commons, out of all form and order?

I said that I had been told that neither Mr. Whitefield nor Mr. Wesley ever did that until they were refused the use of churches, and that both they and some of their companions felt that they had a call to preach the gospel, which was above all form and order.

"To preach the gospel!" she repeated bitterly; "a clergyman should tell people their duties, and deliver

good discourses on our holy religion ; that was his business, and not to be condemning his hearers as all sinners together."

After all, I saw that it was his doctrine that had irritated her, and which she could not forget.

She didn't like it, and yet she must talk about it, and talked to me for want of a better person ; for, as I had guessed, and she let out, the Squire would no more tolerate such doctrine in his church, than he would that a popish priest should preach there.

We had a tremendous commotion in Briarhurst soon after that. For Mr. Wesley, being in our neighbourhood, offered his assistance to our rector ; and this being rejected with scorn, it seems he resolved on his usual course, and announced that he would preach on a hill close by, on the following Sunday evening, there being no service at that hour in the church.

The notices were posted about the village on the Friday preceding ; and when the Squire came in to dinner at one o'clock, he told us what he had seen, and that he had ordered another bill to be printed and posted up everywhere alongside of it, to the effect that any of his tenants who were known to attend the service, would immediately receive notice to quit their houses.

I had never seen him so excited before ; but he said that such practices required to be put down with a strong hand.

"But, sir," remarked Mr. Edmund, "many of the people might go out of a mere curiosity, and without any intention of turning Methodists; would it not be rather hard on them? Why, I confess that, if you had not forbidden it, I should have felt some desire to hear for myself what this singular man is like."

"If you go," said the father, imperiously, "I will certainly disinherit you."

At this, poor little Molly's countenance fell even more than the son's; for we all dined together in this house, so she was a witness of her uncle's displeasure at what he considered an invasion of his territory; and came to me crying afterwards, having heard of this service before, and set her little heart on going.

After all, the people's curiosity could not be restrained; for, in spite of all the efforts of parsons and landlords,—and Mr. Cremlyn had persuaded many to take his own course,—there were hundreds assembled to hear that preaching;—so the old gardener told me; and he was there, though the Squire did not know it,—and many of the Briarhurst folks among them.

Indeed, fifty names were brought up the next day by the steward, who was himself sent as a spy; and, though some of these got off by means of various excuses, yet a dozen poor families really had the notice served on them, and they were obliged to leave their happy homes.

No doubt this was the greatest act of severity in the

Squire's whole life; and the affair spoilt the latter part of our visit very much; for, though fear kept me as quiet as I could be, it was not possible to prevent my prepossession in favour of the good man from being known to some members of the family; especially as the girls had often before that questioned me closely on my home life, as young ladies always will, and more particularly when they are fresh from school, as Jane was.

Indeed, we had had much pleasant intercourse together, for they were most amiable girls; and our discourse had not unfrequently turned on religious matters.

I don't think that their prejudices were so strong as their father's,—young people's seldom are; and so we had talked freely; and I had once related to them the trick which Walter had played us, and how, through it, we had unintentionally heard this great evangelist. Besides, one of Mistress Anne's suitors—and I thought the one she most favoured—had of late become, at least, one of his admirers.

So, although the Squire's strong will, and the strict discipline in which he had trained his children, kept all things outwardly quiet as yet, there were evidently the beginnings of a division among them, which made me remember the Saviour's words: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother. . . . He

that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

Yet I was always a terrible coward; and at that time a particular dread of the cross hung over me,—I mean that sort of cross which it seemed likely that I might be called to take up, which was the displeasure, and perhaps dislike, of some members of that family which had treated me so kindly, and especially of the heads of it; and I did all I could to avoid it; for which I have often since reproached myself.

Not that any person ought to seek after reproach for Christ's sake, or give needless offence by affecting any kind of foolish peculiarity; but without seeking after, the occasion is sure to come when, if we are faithful, we shall have to witness for the Saviour in such a way as will offend many.

However, we were at this time spared much that would have been very painful, and which yet seemed inevitable; for our visit at Briarhurst was brought to a close somewhat suddenly, as you shall hear.

when I learnt that my vision of a letter—the vision which I had conjured up in passing from one room to another, was only like a mirage of the desert, which vanishes just at the moment when the traveller thinks that he has reached it;—so sick that I could not help bursting into tears in his presence; and a strange, weak-minded creature he must have thought me truly!

But he was very kind; and in time I was rational again, and listening with interest to all he had to tell of other friends; and somehow, when we got back to the Scotts and some others, my Charley, whom I had just killed in battle, or buried at the bottom of the sea, rose up again, and seemed to me a brave living brother.

Madam Cremlyn kept sending in messages, to beg my friend to take refreshment; but always in vain. He was an old bachelor, he said, and used to rough living; so that he scarcely needed the usual comforts of travellers: only he always said this in such a polished and ceremonious way, that it was hard to believe him.

For my part, I wished they would let him alone; for he was sufficiently cautious and deliberate in communicating his intelligence without any hindrances; and yet every morsel that he let fall had intense interest for me, though he seemed afraid of saying anything, after the specimen of my weakness which I had given him at first.

And so nearly an hour had passed; and Madam Crem-

lyn had paid us more than one visit before he communicated his grand piece of news,—the news of news to us,—namely, that our own Aunt Judith—our very own dear aunt with whom we were to live—had actually arrived, and was staying somewhere in London, where she wished us to join her as soon as we conveniently could.

Do you wonder that I flew to find Annie, and that she left her game of romps with Hugh without one word of explanation or apology, in order to hear all about it, after first clinging round my neck so as nearly to choke me, just as if I had been Aunt Judith herself, and whispering in my ear,—

“Then we *shall* have a home again at last!”

But, oh dear! how vexing it was! People and things are always so contrary in such predicaments. Would you believe it? but Madam Cremlyn and Mrs. Betty were sitting with Mr. Dudley when we got back to him; and there they were all three of them most busily engaged in discussing the genealogies of the Coopers, Cremlyns, and Conynghams, and anxiously making out the connexions between the three families, just as if that was what he had come to talk about.

But everything here has an end, and so at last had that conversation; and then Mr. Dudley told us that our aunt meant to stay for a little while with a friend in Covent Garden, and that we were to go with her there; but that she wished to meet us first at the Scotts', as Mrs. Cooper



was not well enough to bear the excitement ; and her Covent Garden friends could not yet take us in.

Could any arrangement have been more delightful ?

Mrs. Betty, kind soul as she was, saw that we could hardly contain ourselves for joy ; but she did not know how much she added to the pleasure when she declared that she would take us up herself, for that it was not nice for girls to travel alone ; and besides, she wanted to pay some visits in London : " only," she said, " if possible, I must have Molly with me ; so prithee, good sister, lend me the coach to ride over to Woodberry Lodge, and beg the loan of my god-daughter a while longer."

Mrs. Betty had always been good to us ; and I had got very fond of her, in spite of the many recent attacks which she had made on what she called my singularities. But after all, I believe she only did that because she couldn't help talking about those things ever since she heard that sermon. What a wonderful sermon it was, to be sure ! But then they say, you know, that neither Mr. Whitefield nor Mr. Wesley ever did preach without at least making some people uncomfortable.

Well, we turned up Devonshire Street again at last ; and the hackney coachman had no need to knock, for there was Mr. William at the door, ready to hand us out, and Mrs. Scott and Aunt Judith waiting in the hall to welcome us, and almost to quarrel for the first kiss. Dear Aunt Judith ! She was hardly a bit changed from

what I recollected her, only a little foreign in her dress, which was no fault of hers, because, of course, she had been obliged to buy new clothes whilst she was abroad.

How she pressed and hugged us to her breast, thanking God fervently all the while that she was allowed at length to come back and care for her dear brother's orphan children !

We shed many tears that evening ; but they were sweet, happy, thankful tears, and did us good ; only I thought that Mr. William seemed rather uncomfortable ; for the water would come into his eyes too ; and he had to keep fidgeting about to hide it. They had said that he was in low spirits ; but I couldn't see it. I am sure he amused us all immensely, and I can remember but few such pleasant supper-times. We talked on and on, forgetting entirely how the hours went, until Aunt Judith found out that Annie was fast asleep with her head resting on her shoulder.

Poor Annie ! There was a sad disappointment and trial awaiting her next day ; for it had been one of her happiest thoughts about coming to London, that she would see her little friend Sophy again. And now when next morning she asked to be taken to her, Mrs. Scott's face grew very grave and sad, as she began to prepare her to find the child greatly altered.

" She has been ailing a long time," she said ; " but her governesses seemed to think it was only a cold, and so did

her mother ; for when she was at last written to, she directed that the doctor should be sent for, but did not think it necessary to come herself. You see, they were travelling at Christmas ; so the child did not go home, or she might have noticed her pale, thin looks. I am glad you are come, Annie ; for I think she has pined for you ; but her mother is with her now, and of course she wants her to love her best of all ; so, my dear, you must be wise."

I saw Annie's eye flash amid the tears that were filling it, as Mrs. Scott uttered these last words ; but she only said, " Please, let me go to see her now."

It was well that Mrs. Scott had given us that warning ; for otherwise we should have cried out when we entered the bedroom, and beheld no longer a round, rosy little face, but one instead of it, so thin and pale and hollow-eyed, that but for the expression it could hardly have been recognized.

The child was dressed, and lying on a couch, and beside her sat a lady on whose face was painted an agony which I shall never, never forget.

Mrs. Scott approached her first, and taking her hand with great kindness, begged to be allowed to introduce first Sophy's favourite schoolfellow, and then her elder sister, after which she tried to draw her into the next room in order that the children might be free from any presence which might be a restraint on them ; and I, for

the same reason, after a few kindly inquiries and kisses, quickly followed them.

Our coming seemed to be a surprise to the little invalid ; for her face beamed with pleasure when she saw Annie ; and I heard her say in a low whisper as I left her bedside,—

“ Mamma loves me so much now. It is so nice.”

But the poor mother, the guilty mother, who for so many years had neglected the sweet, precious little charge committed to her ! I shall never forget her self-reproaches, nor the remorse which had seized her.

The intelligence of her little girl's serious illness seemed to have reached her just at a moment when a round of constant gaiety had been disturbed by news of her favourite son's utter abandonment to a course of low and degrading vice and crime ; at a moment, too, when her slumbering conscience seemed to awake and reproach her with the ruin of the one, and the utter neglect of the other child.

Mrs. Scott was prepared for the scene ; for she had seen her before ; but I was utterly taken aback and horrified ; and oh ! if the awakening of a guilty conscience in the land of hope be so terrible, what will it be in that place where hope cometh never !

In fact, we had to lead the wretched mother from room to room until she was out of the dear child's hearing, and at length both the governess and Mrs. Scott had to make

use of almost imperative language, and positively to refuse to allow her to go back until all traces of her grief should have vanished, the doctor having given positive orders that Sophy should on no account be distressed or excited.

After a while we persuaded her to lie down on a bed, and had the satisfaction of seeing her fall into a heavy slumber.

Then Mrs. Scott sent me to fetch my sister; and I found the little girls enjoying one of their old pleasant talks with which we never interfered; as like most other children they could only talk freely when alone.

I thought that Sophy looked better already, and promised that, if our aunt would consent, Annie should go and see her very often, as long as we remained in London; and as we left the room Sophy said,—

“And please bring Molly too, because I want to see her.”

We removed to Covent Garden on the morrow; but a day scarcely passed without Annie's being conveyed in some way or other to sit an hour or two with the little invalid; nor was it difficult to persuade Mrs. Betty pretty frequently to send Molly also; for she, like most other people, soon got much interested in the dear sick child. They would take her dolls, and dress them together; and then a cradle was curtained, and furnished with sheets, blankets, and coverlet, to contain all the pets. At other

times they would read to her out of a book lent by Mrs. Scott, which contained the history of a little boy who had lived in times of persecution, and gone cheerfully to death for his Saviour's sake. But generally they ended their visit by saying to each other some of their little store of texts and hymns, or by reading some of Sophy's favourite chapters. I was in the room sometimes; for after a while they learnt not to mind me; but I generally had my work, and left them to talk and play in their own way, which I thought very pretty and simple.

The worst of it was, that Mrs. Howard was now as jealous of her child's love and preference as once she had been careless of it, and sometimes made great difficulties about letting Sophy's little friends be with her; though every one else could see how much better she seemed to be when she had them, and how she suffered when these fits of jealousy caused her to be disappointed. We often feared that the foolish and injudicious training which she now got would spoil our sweet little blossom, and that she would not grow up in accordance with her early promise. For at this time we really did hope that she might get over her illness; and as soon as she was well enough she was to be removed to her own country home. Yet we had no need to fear. Our little Sophy was in better hands and better training than ours; and her Heavenly Trainer would not suffer any to mar the work which was so near its completion. Our eyes were opened

to this after a while; but during our stay in London, as day after day passed, and the child still seemed to improve, both Mrs. Scott and aunt tried all they could to influence the mother for good, as much for her little daughter's sake as for her own.

As for Aunt Judith's friends in Covent Garden, they did not make much personal impression on me, so that I cannot describe them very well to you. Only I know that they were two widowed sisters, who often had disputes about some religious questions which I had not heard discussed before, and never could understand.

Each lady had her own favourite meeting-house, and used generally to come home full of the sermon, and give us an animated account of it. To please them we went once with each sister, but were not particularly pleased with what we heard; for neither of the ministers seemed to think much of preaching the simple gospel unless he had also given one sharp rap at those who took another view of things, and another at our poor old Church of England.

Ah! well, we can't wonder much at that when we remember "how our fine gold has become dim, and how the most fine gold is changed." We must be "as music to our enemies" while we have so many hirelings, and so few real shepherds over the flock. Men will judge by what they see, and, alas! they don't see much to admire now in our once beautiful house; for that which was

aforetime the glory of it, I mean the spirit, has waxed but dim and faint. It was then, at least ; though, thank God, it is a bit revived now, and with His blessing shall yet revive more and more.

But I must tell you a little about these ministers ; because between them they raised such a storm and conflict in my mind as was not altogether pacified for many a day.

The first was a thin, sharp-faced man, with a hard sort of expression ; and he took for his text, " Jacob have I loved ; but Esau have I hated," and tried to prove from those words that if there were any among his congregation whom God loved, they would most certainly be saved, and could never fall away ; while, as for the rest, they were most certainly doomed to everlasting perdition. And he said that so quietly and unconcernedly, that it made me shudder, and ask myself, " Is this the good news for all people ? " And yet he seemed so positive, and found so many texts that looked as if they proved his point, that very painful thoughts were left behind in my mind.

Next Sunday we went with the other lady to her chapel, where she said we should hear a full, free gospel, as different from what her sister's minister preached as sunshine is from frost ; and when the hymns and prayer were over, a very hearty, fresh-coloured-looking man, with a most kindly face, came out of the vestry, and got up



into a very large pulpit, and gave out his text in a loud clear voice: "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" He said it over, I remember, at least four times, looking all over the chapel as he did so, just as if he were trying to find out some particular person. I don't know whether he found the one he wanted at last or not; but I know that after a time he fixed his eyes on one poor bald-headed man opposite, and seemed to address himself chiefly to him.

It certainly *was* a very different sort of sermon, and one which sounded much more like our Saviour's own loving, gracious invitations; only some parts did not seem to me quite right; for he said so much about every one's being able to turn if he would, without giving even a single hint of any strength beyond man's own being necessary to do it; and also had many flings at those who differed from him. So I was perplexed again. And Aunt Judith must have guessed that, I think, from what she said to me when we were alone, and from the way in which she tried to make things clear. But it is often much easier to have questions asked than to get them satisfactorily answered; and I cannot remember that what she said helped me much at that time.

Besides, I soon learned that Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield were just then disputing about these very points, and that they differed so much that they thought they never could work together again; though, as you know, they soon made up their quarrel, and were friends

again, at least at a distance. Of course, however, the fact that two such good men should separate on this ground must have made many people besides poor me think that the matter cannot be easily settled.

Aunt Judith used to grieve greatly over this split, and say it was the devil's work, she knew, and like one of his clever devices to spoil the work of God. But Mrs. Scott, who was always hopeful, would declare in reply that some good would come out of it; for that God could bring good out of evil, and was able to make "even the wrath of man to praise Him."

After all, it was a remark of Mr. William's which settled my mind more than anything. We had business about our property which kept us in London longer than we expected; and it was quite autumn before we began our journey northward; for, you see, Colonel Cooper's absence threw more on our aunt than she anticipated.

In the meantime we saw a good deal of all old friends, and were in no haste to leave town. At first, and as long as she stayed, we were a good deal with Mrs. Cooper, whom we found as kind as ever, and as prejudiced against any encroachment on the old form and order of lifeless services.

Then the Scotts came to us, and we used together to admire the handsome buildings round the market, and try to picture to ourselves the old monks of Westminster walking in their old convent garden; or, we went to the

Scotts; and Mistress Betty would always accept an invitation to either house, and sometimes talk very freely on matters about the soul, not only with the elder ladies, but even with me, which I thought she would have given up when she had those nearer her own age to talk to.

She generally went, as we did, to St. Martin's Church in the Fields, every Sunday morning, and was not unfrequently induced to accompany us to any more interesting service which we might hear of in the afternoon or evening; so you may guess her prejudices were giving way.

Mr. Whitefield had returned from Georgia by that time, and was preaching about wherever he could for his pet orphan institution for that colony. What a strange hobby that was of his! I mean the thinking so much about one single institution, when England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales were all eager to hear his message. But I suppose it was well he had some hobby; for he could not so easily have got the pulpits he did, unless he had had some particular cause to plead; and thus many who would never have gone to listen to him out of doors would not have heard his voice at all.

As it was, it is extraordinary how many of the great and noble through him heard the gospel message. There were the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, constant attendants on his ministry; and with them often came other members of the nobility—occasionally even the

Prince of Wales himself and his brother William, besides the famous old Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, the Duchess of Buckingham, and others.

I have seen some of these grandees myself when I have been hearing him in Fetter Lane chapel. But it was not the happiest time to hear our great apostle; for all through that summer the dispute was going on, until at last John Wesley settled down in the Foundry as his London head-quarters; and Whitefield in the Tabernacle at Moorfields.

So, you see, we heard plenty about it, and grieved over it too; for we had all heard the older champion of the gospel, and greatly revered him, though most of our friends adhered to and agreed more with Whitefield.

"Ah!" said Mr. William one day, when he and I and Fanny Prescott (for she was Fanny Prescott still) had been discussing the matter; "they are out of their depth, both of them; they are out of their depth!"

I confess I was surprised; because the remark showed that he himself thought about such matters more than I had once supposed; for you will remember how once upon a time his sympathies only went a little way with this movement. Besides, he was naturally reserved about such things.

I knew that it was a grief to his fond mother, that hitherto, when religious questions were on the carpet, he had always given his opinion like one looking on, and

personally unconcerned in the matter, as so many people do; just as if religion were a sort of science, of which it is fitting that an educated person should know something; and that is all.

I don't mean to say it was always so; but too often that had been Mr. William's tone. I am afraid it has often been mine too.

On that day, however, I know he had laid down Mr. Whitefield's famous sermon on "Regeneration" just as I entered the room; and while I was standing at the window, looking out for Fanny, he began to speak of it—perhaps all the more freely because there were not many present.

It had been published now some time; and he had read it, as he did everything that made a stir, as soon as he could get it. But since then many persons had taken on them to answer that sermon, which had induced him to look at it and the answers again and again. I know that, because he had often referred to it. But this time as he laid it down there was a serious—almost troubled—look on his face, such as I had never seen before; and with something very like a sigh he pushed it to me, saying,—

"Have you ever seen that, Miss Judith?"

"Yes," I said; "I read it not long ago."

"And what do you think of it?"

"Oh! I like it very much. I think it beautiful," I answered.

"A certain Mr. Tristram Land, and many others, think

it contradicts the language of our Prayer-book, you know," he replied. "Are you prepared still to like it if that be proved?"

"I think he has the Bible on his side, at any rate; don't you?" I said.

"I fear he has," he answered, in a somewhat melancholy way.

"Fear," I thought, "why should he fear it?" but something kept me from asking.

"But is it certain that our dear Prayer-book is wrong in using those expressions in the Catechism and Baptismal Service as so many people think we must own?" I inquired, supposing that this was why he had said he feared it.

"Oh, no; I don't say that, nor see it at all," he returned, "because I don't believe that when the Prayer-book was composed the word meant just what Mr. Whitefield means when he uses it. It would seem strange in these careless days to say that we are more precise now in our language than folks were in old times; and yet I think we do not so often use words in theological senses without defining the extent of their meaning as they did then; and when we find an old word in use, we are therefore apt to take it in its very highest sense, when perhaps that never was intended. I suppose that some persons must even then have used this word in this highest sense, if it be true, as I have heard, that Calvin

warned Cranmer that he would be misunderstood, as he is ; but I believe in general it only meant such an outward change as that from belonging to no religion to being made a member of the Christian Church, with the name of Christian, and all the privileges that follow."

And I was very glad to hear that, because I did not like our dear Church to be made out wrong. But we soon forgot the Prayer-book in talking of that sermon, or rather about the doctrine itself; and Mr. William told me that he had referred to that when he said, long before, that though he admired the earnestness of the Methodists, yet he did not altogether agree with them. "You see, there are some things, Miss Judith," he continued, "about which a man may be very obtuse, just because he does not like to believe them. And don't you feel yourself that it is hard to be put on the same level with any vile scoundrel who haunts the streets?"

"And yet I suppose that many of the good-living people of the world may have no more love to God in their hearts than those vile scoundrels. And, after all, the First Commandment is that we love God with all our hearts," I answered; for Mr. Underwood had taken such care always to make us look at the matter in that way, that the words rose almost spontaneously to my lips.

"Ah! that's it. That's what we've all got to learn," he said quickly, and this time almost with a groan; and added, "so I fear Mr. Whitefield must be right."

I could not help looking at him with a sort of mixed feeling of surprise and sympathy as he said this ; but I felt rather confused when I saw that he noticed it, and was glad to hear Fanny's knock at that moment.

She immediately began to condole with him on his pale, delicate appearance, and to recommend another journey to some one of those places where people go in search of health, which, to my surprise (for his mother had not said a word about it), he quietly answered that he was already contemplating.

This was within a fortnight of our starting northward ; and we were now only waiting for Fanny's marriage, which was to take place in the following week, and the day after her intended husband's ordination. They were then to sail for Georgia, to carry over the money which Mr. Whitefield had collected for his orphans, and as far as possible to supply his lack of service there.

As I told you, we soon after got talking about that painful dispute which was then separating the two great preachers ; and Mr. William made the remark that both were out of their depth.

He did not explain what he meant ; but I know he thought then, as he has done ever since, that the good men did not really differ as much as they supposed they did, and that it was therefore a great pity to allow anything to prevent their going hand-in-hand in the great work to which God had so plainly called them.



But whatever he meant, I know that those few words had a good effect on me, because they made me try to forget the controversy altogether, and endeavour to read my Bible as I used before ever I heard of it.

It is hard, though, to do so when one has been puzzled ; but I never got any comfort by trying to reason over or reconcile those particular texts which the thin, sharp-faced minister considered to prove his points, and those which the hearty, good-natured one thought made for him ; and I don't believe any one ever did. They cannot contradict each other, though we, who only understand a little about them, may think they do so. No, they cannot, I say, because they are all the words of God. They are *above* our puny reason, but not contrary to it. Indeed, we cannot reason at all about them ; just because we do not know the whole case, but only just what God has seen fit to tell us, which is enough for our salvation, and no more.

It is a comfort, though, that let men quarrel how they may, and say what they will, they never can blot out those precious words, which tell us that God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,"\* and that He "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."† I think we may be content to know that, without trying to argue about it. For we have got each one of us first to

\* 2 Pet. iii. 9.

† 1 Tim. ii. 4.

make sure that we have come to that knowledge ourselves, and then to do everything we can to save our fellow-creatures.

If we only *could* see how that work should engross us, how it should fill our thoughts, and keep us from wasting our time over vain disputations ! We don't think of ourselves or others as actually *under sentence of death*, and that *death eternal*, as long as we are unreconciled to God, which is the same as being unregenerate,—or we should not trifle so.

Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield did; and that kept them from stopping their work for any discussion. They saw that people had deceived themselves long enough, and that thousands had gone dancing blindfold along the broad road which leadeth to destruction, fearing no danger, just because when they were little infants they were brought to the baptismal font; and so these good men spent their lives in trying to wake them up, and show them that “except a man be born again” in a deeper sense than that, “he never can see the kingdom of God.”

It is of no use reasoning and talking about theological terms. This is the change that *must* take place in every one of us; and it is a change of heart. A good many people whom I knew or met with about that time were beginning to find that out; and I assure you it seemed to engross all their thoughts, and make them think every question a trifle until that was settled.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER all, it was quite autumn before we got away from London.

Little Sophy and her mother had left some time before ; the latter being under the impression that her child was getting quite well ; though I don't think that impression was shared by the darling invalid.

It was a comfort to see that the spring of love, being once opened in that parent's breast, did not show any signs of running dry, but continued to flow in tenderness which seemed unspeakably delightful to the little girl ; and yet it required strong faith to give her up into that natural guardianship, seeing that Mrs. Howard had daily given proofs of her utter unfitness for its exercise in every possible way. And my poor sister, who was always so quick in discerning where any one was suffering wrong, either through neglect or incapacity, could hardly be persuaded that our only resource was in prayer. I can well remember how passionately she pleaded with us, that by any means,—an open remonstrance, or appeal to the

doctor, and what not,—we should interpose to prevent a step which she declared must deprive her little friend of any chance of recovery : and also how bitter was her grief at the separation.

But happily for her peace of mind, Sophy soon wrote herself,—and an intimate friend of ours who saw her confirmed the report,—“that the country air and the nice new milk had done her a world of good !”

The last circumstance that I recall of that stay in London was a visit that we paid to Mrs. Prescott just after her daughter had sailed for Georgia, and some grand show or procession which we witnessed from her house. The occasion or nature of it has now quite gone from my memory ; but even to-day I seem to see the horsemen and carriages, together with the banners and music, as they all passed before me. Fleet Street was wonderfully crowded that day ! It was quite a different street from what it usually is, so full of passengers, and so difficult to cross. And we were all greatly diverted with the clock of St. Dunstan's Church, with its iron clubmen standing to strike the hours, though Annie and I had seen it once before. Indeed, it seems a constant amusement to many people ; for there is always a crowd opposite, watching for those said clubmen to raise their maces.

After the show was over, and as soon as we could escape from the good Mrs. Prescott's hospitality, Aunt Judith took a coach, and carried us to look at a house in

Spital Yard, where in her youth she had often visited. One Dr. Annesley dwelt there then, she said, who had about two dozen children. He was a very worthy man, and reckoned one of the best preachers of the day; but he did not belong to our Church, having felt himself constrained to leave it on the passing of the Act of Uniformity, after which he had been obliged to hide for nigh ten years, as if he had been a thief or a murderer.

But when the Declaration of Indulgence was published, the good man came out, and got a meeting-house licensed in Little St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, where he ministered for twenty-five years. It was there our aunt used to be taken while yet but a young child, and she still well remembered his daughters, many of whom were beautiful, hilarious, and witty. Indeed, she had been called after one of them: and having heard that another of them became afterwards the wife of Dr. Samuel Wesley, and the honoured mother of Mr. John Wesley himself, she said she would renew the acquaintance, if ever she came in her way. So you see, Annie, my dear, I have some reason, as I hinted before, to like my name, being called in some sense after that great man's aunt.

It was very interesting to us to look even at the outside of that old house where our dear aunt had so often played when she was yet but a small maiden; but we could not get inside it, not knowing any of its then inmates, which vexed me greatly.

At last the day came for us to bid good-bye to the great busy city of London, with all its pleasant and unpleasant associations, and begin our long and tedious journey up to our new house among the North-country folks, or "foaks," as they call themselves, of Yorkshire. It would have been but a dreary pilgrimage indeed, had we travelled the whole distance without a break; but our aunt had an aged cousin in Leicestershire, whom she greatly desired to visit, not having seen her for many years. So it was settled that we should travel that way, and pass a week or so under her roof; and then, besides, Mr. William Scott had, as it were, all of a sudden, taken a fancy to be away from London for a good while together; feeling certain, he said, that "it didn't agree with him; and that an easy tour from place to place would be more likely to give him a chance of recovery than staying always moping away in that little parlour, with nothing particular to do, and nobody he cared for to visit him." I know that his mother was somewhat distressed that he should speak like that; for I heard her say to our aunt that she had oftentimes wished that he had never been led to indulge in the hope of getting well, since he fell back so much; for that formerly he had been so patient, and had got used to amuse himself with his books, that he had seemed quite happy and resigned; whereas now he was often on the fret, and could not bear the idea of being always a helpless man. But his mother never crossed her

poor son's wishes; so she consented at once, though it cost her something to give up her poor people, and all her pleasant meetings and friends. And Sally was bidden to fetch her old father and mother to bear her company in the lonesome house.

It was arranged that we should all set forward together, and part at Oxford, the first place that Mr. William was desirous of staying at. And that stage of the journey would have been pleasantness itself, only for the parting that was coming closer and closer every hour. For indeed, Annie, dear as Aunt Judith had become to me, and near, too, as she was by the tie of blood-relationship, which has something in it different from any other, yet Mrs. Scott had taken a place beforehand in my heart; and she never could be displaced even by her.

We stopped a while, too, in Oxford; for when we got there, our good aunt said she thought it would be a pity for us to miss seeing that ancient seat of learning. She had kept that surprise for us until the moment when we thought we must say good-bye; and a joyful one it was. I think I never admired a city, and especially a High Street, so much; and then it was delightful to climb the college towers, and walk in the gardens and meadows, and, above all, to visit the very rooms where so many good and learned men had lived.

But those few pleasant days went too quickly; and the farewell had to be said at last. I remember crying

bitterly for an hour after Mr. William had shut the coach-door, and the horn was blown for our departure. It was one of the sorest partings that I ever remember ; and nothing could persuade me to believe that it would not be years before we met them again. I was afraid aunt would be vexed with me, and fancy that I was grieved to go away with her ; but she never said one sharp word about my fretting, or even seemed to wonder at it a bit. Only I think she felt sure that it was the best thing for me to be going away as I was ; why, I could not even guess for a long, long time. But I am sure now that she knew me then better than I knew myself.

However, I shall explain all that by-and-by. We reached the old town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch at last, and thence got a post-chaise on to where Dame Willoughby (for so every one called her) lived alone, with her one servant, in a cottage, and not a mile distant from Donnington Park, to which that dear good Countess, of whom I had heard so much in London, had but lately returned to spend a season in retirement, far away from the court and the scenes for which she had never had much taste, and now less than ever.

It is said that "not many noble are called ;" but truly she is a bright star among the few. I wonder, did ever woman wield such a power for good in this or any other land ! She has been a succourer of many in difficult times, aye, of many, not only of the every-day servants,



but of the chosen ministers of God. Wherever they are, she finds them out; so that they run to her as to a mother in Israel, and oftentimes get comfort from her.

And now among her poor people and the servants of the household we saw how greatly beloved she was.

Ah! it was the love of Christ that made her so lovely; for truly she was filled with it; and though it *constrained* her, she was ever running for fresh supplies, and ever bent on knowing nothing else.

There are many now-a-days who talk very loudly of that love, who never seem *constrained* by it at all. I mean they never seem forced to give up anything, or to do anything but what they have done all their lives. Can such people really know enough of Christ to love Him in truth and verity? Are they partakers of Christ, or only admirers of Him? I have often wondered about that.

But I was going to tell you how full this good dame was of Lady Huntingdon and all her doings. She had known her from a little child; for you must know the Countess was brought up in those parts, her father's house being not far distant from the residence of the Earl of Huntingdon; I mean Donnington Park; and the Countess was ever affable and gracious to all.

"It is well in my mind," said the old lady, when we were one day speaking of her, "how when but of tender years, some nine or ten from her birth, Mistress Selina was seen to follow a little corpse to its resting-place, and

how the tears rolled down her soft cheeks whilst the parson was reading over the body. Her father's maidens do say that ever after that time she has used herself to think much of death, and to be often in her closet praying to her God. And one told me that it has always been in her heart to ask for a union with one of a godly family.

"That prayer He granted truly; for there be many of Lord Huntingdon's kin who know the Lord. Methinketh also, that if her prayer had been for a godly spouse, she might have had that too; but now my Lord of Huntington, though he be ever good and kind to her, doth not seem to see as she seeth.

"She was well-nigh twenty-one years old when she was united to my Lord Theophilus; and it was his noble sisters, the Ladies Hastings, who brought to her the true, free gospel of our blessed Lord. The Lady Margaret learnt it first, and was wont oftentimes to speak to her of a peace which she never knew, and which cometh through a perfect work done *for* us, and not by an imperfect work done *by* us, as she was then a dreaming of.

"But when the Lady Margaret thus spoke, it brought as it were a pang to her heart, and she strove all the harder to fight against sin.

"At length was she smitten of a sore disease, which well-nigh brought her to the gates of death; and the fear of it fell heavily upon her; for, looking back on her past life, all her righteousness seemed but as filthy rags; and she

saw she had nothing to plead worth pleading before the bar of God.

"'Twas then that one set before her the Lord Jesus, whose blood washeth out all our misdeeds, and whose righteousness covereth all our uncleannesses; and in Him she then found peace, because she saw He had done all for her, and would answer all for her; for which cause she needeth not fear. So now she crieth day and night,—

' Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all !'

"And ye see," said Mrs. Willoughby, "she tries to give all; for be she where she may, she careth for nought else than to make Him known, not only among the people whom her soul loveth, and to whom it cleaveth, but to all poor sinners. Why, there be one among her servants now, David Taylor by name, and he being, as men say, well taught for the poorer sort of folk, and withal well learned in Christ through the preaching of these Methodists, she sendeth him to tell all round the country of these same good news. God blesseth him too; so that many having believed through his means in the villages round about here, he goeth now, at her desire, even into the farther parts of our county, and of Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire.

There be some that say we should leave these things to

the clergy ; but, as our Countess saith, ‘ What if these be blind guides, will they save them whom they lead ? Nay ; but “ *both shall fall into the ditch.* ” ’ So David goeth out often with Mr. Ingham.”

“ And pray who may Mr. Ingham be ? ” asked my aunt. “ Who ? ” cried her cousin. “ Why ye’ll hear enough of him when ye come into Yorkshire ; for he preacheth much there, and has many societies of those who believe. They say that one of the Earl’s sisters, Lady Margaret, hath already bestowed her heart on him, and will shortly give her hand, though she be his senior by as many as twelve years.”

We saw the good Countess more than once during our short stay in those parts, for she often came to the cottage ; and truly she was a woman of goodly presence, her forehead being both bold and noble, her eyes large and bright, her nose a trifle aquiline, and her lips well formed and expressive. I liked her face well, though none counted her a beauty ; and her manners were nobility and gentleness itself.

From her own lips we heard so much of the spread of the truth in Yorkshire, that it made us feel all on fire to be amongst those with whom our lot was to be cast, and amongst whom our work lay. But we had other visits to pay before we were to reach Haworth ; so that we could not hope to arrive there for several weeks. Moreover, our aunt had a little property in various parts of the

north ; and her presence being first required at Rochdale ; we made haste thither, but were scarcely settled down into lodgings before aunt fell sick ; and we were thus detained a much longer time than she desired ; and a season it was truly of great anxiety to me.

I have few pleasant recollections of that place ; for we were among strangers, and those who seemed to me hard and cold. It was my first introduction to North-country folk, and did not prepossess me in their favour.

I know, now I understand them better, that it was their own independence and dislike to interference that made the people of the house leave us alone day after day, and never come near us even to ask after our invalid ; but it seemed to me barbarous at the time ; while even aunt's own acquaintances in the place were very sparing of their sympathy : their voices were harsh ; and they had a way of suspecting everybody, that was very chilling.

We could not go out much while we were there, having none to walk abroad with us ; and when we did, the talk of the people seemed nothing better than gibberish to us. But just when aunt was getting better, we heard that Mr. Ingham was coming, and that a clergyman named Rogers would go round the country preaching with him.

She was heartily glad of that, and cried,—

“ Now, mark me, Judith ! it is this preaching of the gospel that will make Lancashire learn to ‘ love as

brethren,' and to 'bear one another's burdens,' and 'be gentle towards all.' We will stay and see if it do not melt down some of their roughnesses."

So we stayed there a few days longer than we had intended, not knowing how soon we should again listen to the Word preached. Also aunt, as her custom was, made herself known to these good men as one suffering in bodily health, and craving the benefit of Christian fellowship.

They shortly perceived of what manner of spirit she was, and thereupon much sweet taking of counsel followed; and when we separated, it was as those who were one in Christ, and sharers of the same blessed inheritance.

From thence, when aunt was well-nigh recovered, we journeyed on to Todmorden, where she had friends, and a place also worthy of being visited, it being situated in a wild and beautiful valley between the towns of Rochdale and Leeds.

We did not know until we came there that Todmorden had a godly man for its minister, and one who laboured earnestly for the good of his people. Ah! but we heard not then the half of his worth, though all men bore testimony that "parson wor wonderful changed sin he cum among 'em, and that his ploy wor a labour b'yard t'moast a mon."

It was but for a week that we rested at Todmorden, for we were called to other parts; but joyful was the

news which came to us soon after, that this same Mr. Grimshawe was appointed to be our pastor at Haworth; and aunt said that it was one of the plainest answers to prayer which she had ever had in her life. And now we were the more eager to bring our journeyings to a conclusion, and settle down in her old home, where she had been mostly bred up, and where both our grandparents lay. Nevertheless, it was some time yet before she could settle all her affairs, so that the new minister was settled before we could set forth.

At length, however, we were free to go.

But it was a strange, wild country all round those parts, and the travelling being of the roughest kind, we disliked the journey greatly, being, as we were, only two weak women and a little girl. So we inquired beforehand for one to drive us who knew both the road and the people; and moreover gave a seat on the box to an honest, stout fellow, whom aunt had known years ago, and who happened to have come out where we were on business. The whole distance was, I suppose, not more than a matter of twenty miles; yet in winter-time we could scarcely have made the journey, at least except during a clear, dry frost; for at many seasons the horsemen had to ride up to their saddle girths in mud, and at others folks might have perished in the snow.

But it was then the month of June, and the bleak, wild country was clothed in its softest dress. As we ap-

proached the town of Keighley, aunt began to feel quite at home, and made us take notice of everything, seeming by that time to have lost all fear, and to begin to think herself among her own people.

But I should tell you that the top of the coach was open, that we might have plenty of the fresh breezes that were coming over the moors, and also hear from our honest friend of any changes that might have taken place whilst she had been away.

"Foaks doant owt ta blaw ther awn trumpits, or elz ah moight tawk ov t' dooins ov wife an' self," remarked the worthy man, as we drove into the main street. "There be a varry small bit shqap thear, but t' plaice iz tidy an' raither clean; an' t' bizniz iz summat worth havin'."

"Why, Carrodus," rejoined our good aunt, "you must have striven hard to make that start; for I know you were in trouble enough when I left you. But you are a happy man to have such a thrifty partner."

"Well, hevin spocken o' thiz, we'll nah hev a look abaht t' plaice," returned Mr. Carrodus, without condescending even to seem gratified with aunt's compliment; and then he proceeded to call my attention, as a new-comer, to the substantial grey stone houses of which the town is composed, remarking that there was none of our trumpery painted wood about those parts; for this was a travelled man, and one who held all southerners in due contempt. And certainly he had some cause to boast of the superior



cleanliness of the Yorkshire housewives ; for never until I entered that county had I seen houses so scrupulously clean, both inside and out.

"And so we are to put you down here, Carrodus," aunt said, "though I'm sorry to find you have forsaken old Haworth."

But he said, "Nah, nah, mizzuz ; ah sud loike ta go ahl t' way, an' pleeze yur, for t' be t' furst time in life az ah gone in t' coach like thiz ; an' ah'l'jist loike ta hear wot t' world up thear 'ull hev ta say abaht it."

I believe the truth was, that he was curious also to hear what we girls would think of the place and the country ; for he appeared highly gratified when we both grew sufficiently excited to stand up and admire those ranges of distant hills, which stretch away behind the dun and purple moors that form so extensive a background to our village ; or trace the course of the little "beck" which flows on and on through the meadows towards the right ; though he growled a bit when we ventured a disparaging remark or two on the thin crops, and especially on the pale, hungry-looking, grey-green oats, which we thought certainly indicative either of poor soil or bad farming.

"T' farmin' wor exshellent," he declared, "and az fur t' land, he sud like t' zee az good i' t' counties dawn southard."

So we were obliged to drop that subject as speedily as might be. Indeed, as we were then just coming in sight

of the steep hill on which Haworth stands, we had plenty of other questions to ask. The road to Haworth crosses a bridge over the little beck before it begins the ascent; and that once past, we began to climb the narrow street of the village, of the steepness of which you may form some idea when I tell you that it is paved with flag-stones set on end, in order to give a better hold to the horses' feet. As for Mr. Carrodus, his curiosity was fully gratified; for we had plenty of spectators as we drove along, any vehicle above a waggon being a rarity in the village. And there were plenty of heads, too, poked out of the windows of those high stone houses which formed the narrow street, to the visual orbs of some of which there was presented the image of an old and well-tried friend,—an image which was so welcome that not many minutes had elapsed ere from house to house there rang the announcement,—

“An' iv ta beant Miztrezz Judith Conyngham, hur varra awn self! Ta be! Ta be! Tawk abaht horses! Off wi' t' creeters, an' pull hur hoame t' selves.”

So the poor beasts soon found themselves supplanted; and we went in style, amid shouts of welcome, on, on, and on, up, up, through the village, till we came to the level ground on the top, where we paused for a moment, that our conductors might hold a consultation about something, the purport of which they did not think fit to communicate to us.

Soon, however, we started off again, but more slowly, and with somewhat greater dignity we were drawn a little off the main road to the spot where stands our venerable church, of which, having made the circuit, we took leave, and passing down a bye-street near, drew up in front of the parsonage, at the door of which the foremost were about to knock, when a servant appeared, and to their evident disgust informed them that "T' maistur wor awt a preachin'."

This fact having therefore been communicated to us, with the addition, that "Thiz be a new mon, an' one az knaws hiz biznizz," our aunt requested our friends to take us to her own home, where, after many hearty shakes of the hand, we parted.

"There, Judith, my girl!" cried our aunt as soon as we were alone, "so much for the coldness of Yorkshiremen! Who will say now that they can't show their feelings like other Englishmen? They may be slow about making friendships; and I don't say they aren't; but make a Yorkshireman your friend, and he's your friend for ever!"

"And what if I make one an enemy, aunt?" I said, laughing; for we always did tease her a bit about her fondness for North-country folk.

"Ah!" she said, "I advise you not to do it."

But with all her partiality for the natural character of the West Riding people, my aunt knew well enough that many of those amongst whom we had come to,

live were little better than savages; and I think it was only the consciousness of the hold which she had gained on their affections that gave her courage to do it. Indeed, her love for them had begun with compassionating their neglected condition; for truly all her young days it might have been said that no man cared for their souls.

However, to go on with my story.

Aunt's house was just on the outskirts of the village, and not far either from the church, schools, or parsonage. It was one in which our grandparents had lived during the latter years of their lives, and was roomy, substantially built, and roofed like the parsonage and some others, with heavy flag-stones to resist the violence of the winds to which it was exposed.

She kept two servants, a man and his wife, the former of whom attended to her garden and pony, while the latter did the work of the house. They were rough, honest creatures, both of them, and had taken good care of everything during her absence; only they did not seem to relish the addition of our unfortunate selves to the family, fearing, I suppose, we should turn things out of doors. But as aunt had said we could not judge by their manners, especially at first, I tried to put up with their short answers, and even with no answers at all, to my questions, as the case might be, in hopes of winning their good-will in the end; though I may confess now, it went sorely against the grain; and that I felt that if my work was to be always

amongst such folks as these, it would be of a very uncongenial kind.

It was some time, however, before I was put to the proof.

I had not been feeling well for some time past, though I had not ailed anything particular, only I seemed to have a depression of spirits and a general lassitude which I could not shake off. Aunt set it down to having been too much confined with her whilst she was poorly, and to fretting and thinking about Charley; and I dare say that last had a good deal to do with it; for all this time we never had one word from him, though he had been gone a year and three-quarters: so how could I help fretting about him?

It was on a Friday that we got to Dawgreen House; and, anxious as I was to go to church, I was far too ill to get out of my bed by Sunday, and had to lie moaning and tossing about within my thick curtains, with all sorts of horrid visions passing before my eyes, while the others were feasting on the pure word of life from Mr. Grimshawe's lips. I remember how Annie ran in and climbed on my bed afterwards to tell me with such glee of the beautiful sermon they had had; and how they had sat in a black oak pew with Aunt's name painted in white on the door of it; and how the clergyman had seen some boys playing at the end of the church, and had stopped to reprove them in the middle of the sermon; with many

more particulars of the service; until dear aunt, who saw better than Annie did that I was in a high fever, imposed silence on the child, and finally sent for the doctor. The messenger despatched was a young girl, niece to Mistress Peggy, aunt's domestic; and when she returned, the following conversation took place outside my door, the elder woman having left the room to get the answer.

"Well, ha'n't yo brought t'owd mon wi' yer?"

"Nah, not ah," returned Grissel.

"Whoy not, yer silly lass?"

"Cause az haw he wunna come sa quick. Doan't see wot need thear be ta hurra."

"Well, but mayhap he thinks az he's called onny to a sarvent."

"Sa did he t' furst," returned Grissel; "but ah tell'd hem az how 'twor for t' young mizzuz, and he'd get poid; so ah think an' he'll come."

He did come shortly after, to my horror; for he straight-way ordered me some of the worst draughts I ever tasted, and talked of a blister on the morrow. When the morrow came, I was covered with a thick rash which this learned or unlearned apothecary pronounced to be measles; and aunt, who was, I verily believe, the better doctor of the two, confirmed his opinion, and when he was gone, expressed a wish that she had never called him in, as she could manage that sort of thing herself. In fact, I believe she hadn't much confidence in these village practitioners,

and had half a notion that many of them killed more than they cured.

“ Well, I had the blister, and was very weak after it ; and then I caught cold on the measles, which was worse than all, especially as it brought on me many dozens more of nauseous draughts.

Altogether that illness was a long business ; and I felt often both low and lonesome, in spite of all aunt's tender care, and my little sister's loving attentions ; for she, dear child, having had the complaint already, was allowed to be with me all through.

It was the fretting, and longing, and yearning, for those whom I could not have, for those who lay sleeping in Mayfield churchyard, and for those, far, far away, that was the worst part of it. I don't know why it was ; but those feelings seemed just then to have taken such a hold on me, that I could by no means shake them off. They held me down with a giant's grasp, and made me just as weak as a babe. And all the time I felt so sinful, and so rebellious, and so ungrateful,—which no doubt I was, though now I know it was weakness of body as much as of soul, that prevented me from rising above them.

But then, I had one great help and comfort in this confinement ; and it was one, the like of which I could not have enjoyed in many other places in England ;—that was, the precious pastoral visits of the new clergyman. He used to put very close questions to me, and probe very deeply

into my wounded heart ; and sometimes I couldn't answer him as confidently as I desired ; yet he was very tender with me, and I think knew how I felt.

Although he had not been in the parish many weeks, yet he was hard at work already, preaching all over it, in rooms, barns, fields, quarries, or by the roadsides, as well as twice every Sunday in the church. And still he found time to come and see me most days whilst I was at the worst.

Indeed, what with her anxiety about me on the one hand, and her intense delight at finding her own parish in possession of such a minister on the other, Aunt Judith was almost beside herself. For you must know that though, perhaps, she had caught somewhat of the shortness of the Yorkshire manners, which made her rather less pleasant in my eyes than Mrs. Scott, and kept me from feeling so drawn to her at first ; yet she had nothing of the reserve and stoical self-possession of those people.

I must tell you, however, that this sort of coldness and hardness of the Haworth population very much gave way under the preaching of Mr. Grimshawe, as I found the first time I went to church.

Aunt had been telling me how every Sunday it got fuller and fuller, and how men and women began to come from the parishes round to hear one whom some called "mad Grimshawe," and others declared to be a messenger sent direct from God ; and once or twice she told me that



she had seen tears coursing down a good many cheeks near her.

But on that occasion the old church was so crowded that the very doorways were thronged; and many could not get near them. We had some difficulty in getting to our pew, though we went a quarter of an hour before the time; and in the aisles the people stood thickly all the service.

Nevertheless, Mr. Grimshawe would not begin until every one was still and silent; and to some near him, whose prayer-books lay unopened, he spoke, bidding them find their places with speed, and say the responses. When all were settled, he began in a voice so earnest and full of fire, that the very words sounded different to anything which I had heard before; and he seemed to put a meaning and reality into every one of them. Nobody could help listening; and indeed every one did listen after a little while, though some, no doubt, did so in order to be able to remember more to make fun of afterwards.

But it was when he got into the pulpit, and began to plead with God for a blessing on the message which he had to deliver, that his fervency reached its height. It seemed like Jacob saying, "I will *not* let Thee go, except Thou bless me;" and if other people's eyes were dry then, I know mine were not.

Then he rose from his knees, and began to speak to the congregation from the text he had chosen, in such plain

words that no one could help understanding. I thought that never before had I heard any one who so manifestly felt that he was speaking to a crowd of criminals under sentence of death as he did. Yet he did not tell them of one sin or of another of which he might have known these people to be most of them often guilty. It was our *sinful nature*, the way we forget God, our utter want of love to Him by nature, that he insisted on, and then the ruin to which this was bringing all unrepentant sinners. Many strange things he said which some persons might not like; but he only cared to get folks to understand, to see themselves as at that very moment in fearful danger. As he went on, some round me began, not only to shed tears, but to utter sobs and cries. I looked up, and there, all over the building, were those who seemed suddenly seized with a fear and agony which made them forget that any were present but themselves; and speedily there was nought to be heard but the sounds of weeping and groaning, so that the preacher was forced to stop a while.

When he saw that, he began to tell lovingly and gently of the way of escape, and of Jesus, whose blood cleanseth from all sin; using many arguments to persuade them to turn and be reconciled to God. It made me think of Mr. Wesley's sermon again; and yet Mr. Grimshawe had a way of his own.

When all was done, I heard one say,—

"Well, ah cum a gooad way, but t'arnt been for a troifle; an' ah'l cum again every Sunday, an please God ah'm able t' wauk t' distance."

And others waited to beg and pray the minister to go over and speak near their own homes of the wonderful grace of God.

We heard next day that a neighbouring curate, when he was told of these things, said with a sneer,—

"Ah! 'twill all end in fits or convulsions, and in making men worse than they were before." But the prophecy did not come true; on the contrary, the gospel had free course, in spite of the vain attempts of wicked men, and "was glorified."

We found every one talking of "t' new parson" as soon as we entered the parish; and it was wonderful with what respect they spoke of him, too, even if they wouldn't receive his message. It was evident that he was the man for the place, the chosen instrument prepared for the work, and fitted to it. For if Yorkshiremen had strong wills and plenty of independence, so had Mr. Grimshawe, though he was born in Lancashire. Indeed, his desperate determination and unflinching courage went a great way towards gaining him the ear of his flock. And then his strong constitution and ability to bear hardships were additional qualifications. I don't know what a delicate man could have done in that wild dreary place, and among such rough people as the Haworthers. And yet we know

that even a Paul may preach in vain, unless God give the increase. We felt that every day as we saw hardened sinners changed into humble saints; and he must have felt it, too—all the more, I think, because it did not appear that such great success had attended his work in Todmorden.

My illness had introduced him to our house, and after that he was often there; because aunt was so ready to help in all his plans; and we used often to be sent on messages to prepare for a preaching or a catechising in some distant part of the parish,

There was a great pleasure and a great excitement about that, because the gospel went as real news here, and was not received as it often was at Mayfield, as if it had been an old and well-known song. The people were eager about it, because they had heard so little before of that plain kind of teaching. Indeed, I don't believe that they had had much teaching of any kind, as most of the clergy round those parts were but little in their parishes.

And then so many received the word with gladness that the work grew upon him; so that if he had not had many expedients, those who were awakened would have gone unfed and unbuilt up in the faith. However, he rose to the work like a great man as well as a good one, as Mr. Carrodus used to say; and from the first he was one of his great assistants.

I remember that one day going to Keighley to make some purchases, under the protection of the faithful Cowan,

we met that worthy man, and found him busy making arrangements for the meeting of the first society of the newly awakened, of which he was to be the superintendent.

It was curious that Mr. Grimshawe should hit on the same plan as Mr. Wesley, of whom at that time he knew nothing; yet I suppose both could not but see that these poor sheep wanted much tending and watering; and that without it their Christian graces would not shine so brightly as they ought. However, I think that wherever there is life there must be something of this hungering after the communion of saints; and especially where that life is in its first strength and ardour.

Mr. Grimshawe had felt the want of Christian fellowship himself; for when he was struggling after the light at Todmorden, with none to understand or help, he must have suffered much. "But then I was called to be a watchman," he would say, "and must not be so tender-hearted. I was fed but little by human means; but that is no reason why others should go short of food. My business is to feed both sheep and lambs; would God I could do it better!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

ALL this time you must not suppose that our old friends had quite forgotten us ; for we had had more than one of Mrs. Cooper's clever, amusing letters, one from Annie Cremlyn, and two or three from Mrs. Betty, besides several from Oxford. Those last were the greatest comforts to me when I was ill, and during the long period of weakness and forced inactivity that followed ; for my dear Mrs. Scott always wrote in so motherly a way ; and her assurances, that not even Aunt Judith should take away her privilege of calling me her child, were so very soothing, that I don't know what I should have done without them. She sent a letter whenever she could get a frank ; and Mr. William always put in a little scrap for his old pet, Annie, and used to tell her how hard he was studying, and lots of things about his college life, so different to the dull London one ; and his mother's rooms in the town ; and all about the rusty old libraries, with their stores of books and manuscripts ; and how much stronger he was than he used to be, and how he could

walk quite a long distance, and what he should do when the long vacation came ; and so on.

Those letters were very interesting ; but, after all, my dear, I don't believe I ever told you that the Scotts had settled at Oxford, or that Mr. William had entered, as he had, at Balliol College, at all.

The only thing that disappointed me was, that though they talked about travelling, and how much they would like to see us, they never once hinted at the possibility of coming up so far north for that purpose. Perhaps they were waiting for an invitation. I used to wish that aunt would send one ; but she never did ; and, indeed, sometimes I half fancied that she was just a little bit jealous about those letters coming at all, and feared that my great love for Mrs. Scott kept me from getting quite so fond of her as she wanted me to be. I don't know ; though I was vexed that she should think so, because really I loved her very dearly. Only we used to wish, Annie and I, that she wouldn't always shake her head, and say so much about Mr. William's great delicacy, and what a pity it was that he studied so hard, when all the while Mrs. Scott said he was getting so much better, and seemed so cheered up about him.

However, as I got stronger, I was able to do more for aunt, and could visit the schools, and read to her sick people, besides helping her about the house ; and, as I was able to be busier, I did not mope so much, but got

some of my old spirits back, and, as she said, was more like a girl, which pleased her very much.

Then, too, I began to get fond of rambling about, and making acquaintance with those wild moors and hills, in which, from old associations, she delighted.

It is true we could not go about alone, as we used at Mayfield, because there were so many rough and wicked people about; but then, when he could be spared, the honest old gardener, Oliver Cowan, was sent with us; for he knew the country and the people, and could tell just where we might go safely, and where we couldn't. Oh! some of those rambles were delicious.

Now and then, when it was fine and dry, we got over to Keighley; and then we almost always paid a visit to our first acquaintance, Mr. Carrodus; but we saw him also pretty often in Haworth church, which he was ever fond of frequenting. He knew something about most of the inhabitants of those parts; and Cowan and he used always to spend some time in exchanging scraps of news about "new parson an' his doins." From their conversations, also, we learnt sad and terrible things about the neglected state of the towns and villages round.

"Mon up thear a doyin'," said the tradesman one day, pointing to a house on a hill hard by. "Ha bin sick noigh on ten months; wunna see t' parson, an' t' parson doan't care."



"But wht iv ouer parson sud loike t' go, wunna he see him?" asked Cowan.

"Loike enough no," returned Carrodus. "Loike an' he'd shoot him from t' windur."

"Master Grimshawe, ha'n't bin shotten yit. Ah'll tell him, thoa," rejoined the gardener positively.

And he kept his word; nor was the call unheeded.

There were many isolated houses, however, like that in which the sick man lived, scattered up and down the country; and some of them belonged to old families which had held possession perhaps for centuries, while others were simple worsted factories. Cowan used to tell us tales about deeds done in some of these, and deeds that had gone unpunished, too, which used to haunt us terribly at night. I suppose that most officers of justice would have shrunk from approaching many of them, so determined were their owners to keep their places to themselves, as they said; yet Mr. Grimshawe went where no one else could, and in the most unlikely places he established some of his services. Thus was the barbarism of the neighbourhood gradually in great measure broken down; and our walks became every week safer and more unrestricted.

One day, I remember it well, news came to us of the dangerous sickness of a certain old servant of our aunt's, who had married and gone to live in a neighbouring village, with which there was but little communication,

partly on account of the bad character of some who lived along the road to it, and partly owing to the bearish roughness of the people themselves.

The clergyman there was only a young curate, who spent most of his time in carousing with two of his own chums at a town some ten miles off. Mr. Grimshawe was out preaching at his old parish, Todmorden; and aunt was very poorly. So what was to be done?

"Let us go, aunt," cried Annie, eagerly. "Cowan wants a job, you know; and God will not let us be hurt when we are going to help a poor creature like that."

Aunt hesitated, and looked at Annie first, and then at me. She was not naturally nervous; and by this time, I think, she had caught some of Mr. Grimshawe's spirit.

"Yes, you shall go," she said at last, seeing I assented. "Isaac Jenkins travels to-day to Kingdown, and will bear you company part of the road. You can get Mark to do the like back again."

So we ran up to fetch our hats,—for we wore hats that summer, gipsy hats, which Mrs. Cooper had sent us down from London not long before,—and while we were tying them on and making ready, Aunt Judith packed a basket with all sorts of good things which we were to carry to the sick woman. Then we set forth; and in about an hour and a half we accomplished the journey, old Cowan "beguiling t' langt on't," as he said, by various interesting tales of events which took place in

the last century, when "mon got hainged oip a deal more often than 'em do now-a-doiys, and sarved 'em roight too. T' hills in them toimes used ta be covered wi gibbets, ta teach foaks bettur monners."

Well, we found out the cottage, and did our best to comfort the poor creature, not only with the dainties which aunt had sent her, but with some of the sweetest texts that we could think of, Annie greatly assisting my memory as I looked them out, and making such appropriate and fitting remarks as somewhat surprised the good woman, seeing what a child she was. West Riding people are not by any means given to superfluous expressions of gratitude; but I must say that very strong ones fell from this one, especially when we promised either to come again or to send some one who would do better than ourselves.

Then we set out to return, Mark accompanying us a little way, though but a little, as he "cudna see what ther was t' be feared on." He had but just left us, and we were making the best of our way over one of the numerous mountain streams, which, quite unbridged, and only fordable in places, crossed our path, when, happening to look back, I espied two horsemen coming down the road behind us.

I confess it gave me a little tremor; for I was no heroine by nature, and Cowan's stories had not raised my courage.

"What shall we do? These may be uncivil persons," I said to Cowan.

"An' iv they be, we cunna help it," he returned; "so young miztrezz, ah 'd'voise you be on t' guard, an' hoist up t' courage."

So saying, he pulled Annie over the ford, and then gave me a hand; so that we both reached the path as the riders came within sight of us.

We stood aside to let them pass, and seeing that they raised their hats respectfully, Annie and I instinctively curtsied, while Cowan stood by staring.

'Twas an elderly little man who came first, reining in his horse nervously, and sitting bolt upright upon it. We had scarcely raised our faces, not liking to look too boldly at the travellers; and he had to shade his face with his hand as he saluted us, because the sun was shining so directly in his eyes, that we might have mutually passed unrecognized, had not the hindmost and younger horseman been quicker sighted.

His beast seemed somehow not so obedient as that of his elder companion, or it might be that his hand was not so firm in guiding it. Anyhow, I heard the words, "Hold up, Victor," and "Get on, sir," repeated a good many times, and at last found the horse drinking beside me, while the rider, quickly dismounting, was saluting Mistress Judith most courteously, and expressing his pleasure at meeting with her so unexpectedly.

"Master Edmund Cremlyn!" I exclaimed. "How very strange!" and as I was hastily inquiring after the welfare of every one at Briarhurst, I heard the cry,—

"Why, Edmund, lad! what art thou doing? Prithee hasten on, or we shall be benighted."

"Nay, good sir," was the answer, "rather do I pray you stay a while, and help these ladies, so lately my father's guests, over this tedious bit of travelling."

On hearing this, the older traveller turned his horse's head; and I, as he came nearer, perceived that it was,—now, Annie, do not laugh,—my old friend, Mr. Dudley.

"Facts," they say, "are stranger than fiction;" but strange it certainly seemed to me, that this singular, quaint old man and I should thus meet for a third time, and meet, too, out on the wilds of Yorkshire.

Nevertheless, I soon found that this meeting, though somewhat premature, was by no means altogether undesigned, seeing that it was his full intention to find me out, and bring me news of such a kind as I wanted, during the short stay which he intended to make in our parts.

We were still some distance from Haworth, but of course nothing would induce the gentlemen to continue riding while Annie and I were unmounted; and so both the good steeds were given into Cowan's charge, whilst we and our newly found protectors walked on before.

We had not gone far before, from their conversation, I discovered good Mr. Dudley and Mr. Edmund to be on

very excellent, not to say intimate terms ; and it appeared to me that the former had either remained in the neighbourhood of Briarhurst, or that he had returned to it several times since that occasion of which I have told you; for he was well acquainted with the doings, not only of every member of the family, but also of that village, as well as with the condition of the country around; so that before we reached Dawgreen my curiosity or anxiety, as the case might be, about many persons was pretty well satisfied. It appeared that of late there had been rather more communication between the two families of Cremlyns, the heads of both having united to put down the first buddings of Methodism in the neighbourhood. Yet, in spite of them, it seemed to be making progress, many of the poorer sort being ready to run anywhere to hear "this new doctrine," and some even from the higher classes. Nay, a certain clergyman whom I had myself seen more than once at the Squire's table, was said to have joined them, and to welcome either of the Mr. Wesleys or Mr. Whitefield to his pulpit, whenever they came that way.

But, for all this, there had been terrible disturbances on the occasions of the out-door services, and more than once had the preacher barely escaped with his life. Mr. Wesley, they said, had but lately left that neighbourhood, and was now on a visit to Donnington Park, where he was labouring very hard; but he had appointed suitable

persons to carry on the work, and to superintend the classes and societies which he had formed ; so that meetings were still held, which greatly disturbed the Squire's peace of mind.

Moreover, that very steward who had been used as a spy on the poor tenants, was now touched himself, and known to be in great distress of mind on account of his sins.

I could not help shedding tears when I heard that the good kind Squire, as I had always called him, gave him no pity for this, but rather spoke severely to him, and bade him be a fool no longer, but attend to his duty, and have no more to do with these troublers of men's minds, or he should quit his service for ever. It seemed such a hard case ; and I thought that the Squire must be so changed to act in that way towards a faithful old servant.

But all this time the young gentleman said not a word as to which side he took himself, though I thought it was not hard to guess, only he always excused his father by saying that he had never heard any of the Methodists preach, and couldn't see why any one should want to interfere with his people, considering how much care he had taken of them.

At last we got back to Dawgreen Cottage ; and there, after paying their respects to its mistress, our friends proposed to leave us, and seek quarters in the village for such a time as would enable them to explore the neighbour-

hood. A proceeding like that, however, was on no account to be thought of; so our hospitable aunt declared; and at length, after some resistance, they consented to be our guests.

It seemed very strange that they should ever have thought of wandering into our parts when there were so many more beautiful and civilized places in England! But then Mr. Dudley was ever an eccentric person, and seldom explained why he did anything; and perhaps something that we may have written to somebody about Mr. Grimshawe's great zeal may have reached his ear, and brought him to see for himself. He was ever a lover of good men; and when he left us, I know that he travelled on into Wales to see and hear a certain Mr. Daniel Rowlands, who was making a great stir there, and from what I have heard was one of the same sort.

Anyhow, it was very pleasant for us to have them, both being such agreeable companions; besides that, they brought us so much intelligence from the o'd outer world which we seemed to have left behind, and only to hear of once in a way when any one had the kindness to send us a newspaper, or could get a letter franked to us.

Mr. Edmund was as amusing and polite as ever; but he was more than that now. Though somewhat backward on the first day, we soon found that he had begun a new life since he knew Mr. Dudley, and that he made no secret of it, confessing to all, as occasion served, that



until lately he had thought himself a very pattern of all good and religious living, and one who needed no repentance, but that he had found out his mistake.

Aunt Judith took a wondrous liking to him ; and we used to marvel how he got on with his father, and why he was away, when, as he said, the house was full of guests ; but he never explained that to us, being very reserved about such matters.

Only he told me one day, when I was asking very particularly, that poor Mistress Anne was in great trouble and disgrace, because she favoured one who had joined the Methodists, and, indeed, had given her consent to marry him, if only her parents would give theirs, which they declared they never would. I had some notion of that from her letter ; but it grieved me sore to think of her now, and what a lonely life was before her. And I could see that Mr. Edmund was sad, too, on his sister's account ; otherwise he would never have said so much about a domestic difference, such things being quite unheard of until lately in his family.

But the news about Dick ! That was the most wonderful of all ! The two cousins had been almost strangers to each other until after that sermon by the old ruin. Since then they had been intimate friends ! It was but a week afterwards that they met, as it were by accident, in a neighbouring village ; and Mr. Edmund would have passed him as if he had not seen him, as was his usual custom ;

but he could not, on account of the forlorn, wretched look on poor Dick's face. So he stopped and spoke, and then, to his great annoyance, found that the poor outcast was determined to walk on with him. Out of the place, he said, he turned as quickly as possible, lest any should notice the company he was keeping, and was no sooner clear of houses than Dick began to unburden his heart as if some sudden hope had come to him with the sight of him.

That sermon ! it had made him miserable. Was there hope for such a wretch as he ? What could he do ?

So spoke the young Publican, and then the young Pharisee, more kindly than one of old, though not better taught, answered with gentle words, that he was no worse than many others, and might yet reform, and become respectable, as others had done before him.

It would not do. "The past ! the past !" cried Dick ; "the handwriting, the score against me. That must remain. Of what use is it to start afresh ? I can't undo that !"

And poor Mr. Edmund had nothing to answer, nothing but words which at that moment he felt to be vain ; so, as he stood side by side with the penitent he could but tremble at the fate which seemed to hang over him.

Home went the one to ponder over questions never asked by him ere this, and in course of time to speak of them to Mr. Dudley ; while away wandered the other, he

knew not and cared not where, unhelped and unsoothed, save by the kindly sympathy of one from whom hitherto he had but met with proud, hard words of scorn.

Dick knew not where he went ; yet, happily for him, it was to meet the evangelist once more ; and from him, with now opened ear, to hear the gospel sound. Soon after his cousin got a letter, ill spelt and scrawled (for the youth never would learn at school), telling the whole story, and written on the eve of making application to his father for forgiveness.

They met again soon after, and this time by appointment ; for the poor youth, though delivered from his great fear, was still in a sorry plight, because that hard-hearted father had rejected his prayer, and was still more angered at the news of his reformation through the preaching of a Methodist, than he had been at his sin.

Well, the end of a long story was, that Dick was now on his way to Georgia, with letters to some of Mr. Wesley's friends there, while his very name was a forbidden one in his father's house. His doating mother was said to be broken-hearted on his account ; but as for Sally and her husband (for she had married a gay young rake in the neighbourhood) ; they greatly rejoiced, looking to become fat on what should have been the elder brother's share.

I suppose these guests must have stayed a matter of a month with us. It seemed to go very quickly, for we were

all very busy, enjoying the blessed privileges of that blessed ministry, and, I may say, helping in our different ways in the good work that was going on.

Indeed, it seemed a shame to be idle when Mr. Grimshawe was preaching sometimes twenty and sometimes thirty sermons a week, and travelling miles and miles most days over rough roads on very hard fare.

And then we were able to explore the country as we had never done before, which to me was charming, because I was just feeling that delightful upspringing of new life which often comes after a long illness. But yet whenever we took those rambles we always had some object in view; for neither Mr. Dudley nor our aunt would have spared time otherwise. And then we would all meet together, Mr. Grimshawe and we, to hear and tell the great things that God was doing; for the work grew, and very soon invitations and entreaties came to our pastor from the poor people in many of the large towns, not only in Yorkshire, but also in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire. It was chiefly the poor and farming people who flocked to hear him; for he was not like Mr. Whitefield, one whom nobles and great orators or statesmen loved to hear, some of them for his eloquence sake only; but rather a plain preacher to plain country folk. And of course, wherever he went, there used to be a room prepared, and notice given. After a time he had his regular stations; but just then, you see, his work

was in its infancy. And oh! it was a glorious work to help in; for the darkness around was thick—a darkness that might be felt, and the people might truly be said to be sitting in darkness, and in the very shadow of death.

But that pleasant visit had a sad ending. Poor Mr. Edmund! I was very sorry for him, though I couldn't grant his request, much as I pitied him. It had never come into my head that he would ask such a thing of me, or else, perhaps, he might have been spared the pain.

Our aunt was disappointed, too, good kind soul; I am sure she was, and thought it would have been such a happy thing for both of us.

Ah! it is of no use. People must settle such matters as that for themselves. Nobody can choose for another; and I told her, Annie, as I tell you, that to save my life I couldn't have said yes to him.

It was just after they had gone away that Annie's second great grief came upon her,—the first being, of course, that most bitter sorrow which I shared with her.

We had been standing together that evening, watching the comet that was seen that year, and wondering what sort of signs and wonders are one day to be seen in the heavens, especially that great sign which shall make all tribes and kindreds mourn, when there came a horseman in haste to the door, inquiring whether young Mistress

Annie Conyngham dwelt there. Poor child! she was always so proud of having letters, and opened this one in such haste, never noticing that it was sealed with a black seal. But she had not read many lines before she uttered a loud cry, and, without reading further, burst forth into an agony of weeping. Ah! I guessed the cause, for we had all known the sorrow that awaited her, though it had been thought that for her "sufficient unto the day would be the evil thereof."

Dear little Sophy had passed away from what to her had been especially a troublesome world, and had entered the haven of eternal rest. The letter was not written by her mother, who was said to be almost frantic with excessive grief, but by some person who stated that she had assisted in nursing her for some weeks past, and in whom the dying child seemed to have reposed confidence; for many sweet messages were sent by her to her dear sister Annie, as she had of late always called her.

With my arm round Annie, and clasping her tightly to my breast, I took up the letter, and read it through aloud, and then tried to speak to her about the sweet hope of reunion, and of the certainty that those "who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him;" but it was long ere she could be in any degree pacified. Your aunt's feelings were always so very strong, my dear; and now she was so certain that if only we had not let her mother carry her away, Sophy might have got quite well. However, I had the

doctor's word to place against that ; for we knew, though she did not, that he had not thought it possible under any circumstances that she could hold out so long as she had done. My heart misdoubted me now whether she ought to have been kept so long in the dark ; but, as aunt said, the child had had all that time in peace which would otherwise have been marred by anticipation of evil tidings. I think, though, she was taken much aback by the violence of her grief, and by the length of time which it took to heal.

We tried hard to get Mrs. Betty to bring her other little friend, Molly Cremlyn, on a visit to us that same autumn, as the best means of turning her from her sorrow ; but the weather was bad just then ; and she could not pluck up courage for the long journey ; so we only got a promise of a visit at some future time, when Mrs. Cremlyn could be induced again to part with her.

So the months passed on somewhat in sadness to both of us.

Annie took a sudden start in the next spring, and began to shoot up rapidly ; so that aunt and I saw that she could not be called "little Annie" much longer. Indeed, after the death of Sophy she lost many of her engaging childish ways, and grew graver and quieter, and altogether more like a budding maiden entering her teens as she was. At the same time she took greatly to her books, and with

no assistance except from aunt and myself, made rapid progress in her studies ; so that I used to look forward with pride to the time when Charley and the Scotts should see her again ;—if, indeed, Charley ever did ; but, oh, how dim and faint that prospect was now becoming !



## CHAPTER XX.

WELL, that autumn, winter, and spring too, all passed away without any particular event occurring, so far as I can remember.

In looking back to that time, there come up before my mind vivid pictures of the wild, bleak, dreary old moors and hills, as they used to look in their winter dress; and they wear that dress until very late into the year, up there, you must remember. Oh! how the wind used to rage and sweep over all that great expanse of country which we from our height surveyed, and how often has it threatened to sweep us who dwelt on the top of the hills, goods and chattels, and house and all, away with it in its wild fury!

One gets used to sights and sounds like those in time, however; and to aunt, who was bred and born among them, they seemed but to whisper that she was at home again.

It was to the raging of the people, and to their fierce, lawless setting of themselves against the Lord and against His anointed, that she could not, and would not, get ac-

customed. So *she* comes up before my mind's eye as one ever at work, morning, noon, and night, trying to quiet this storm. Now she is speaking gentle words of warning, or of comfort, now making with her own hands garments for those who had need of them; now sitting amidst a group of rough but often eager children, teaching things which might make them wise unto salvation; and now standing by one of adults, still rougher, and more bent on mischief, which few besides herself would dare oppose. For by acts of love had she won their confidence; and her disapproval or displeasure was well-nigh the only influence which had in any measure held back these Hawthorthers from deeds black and terrible, during many a long, bygone year,—until lately, that is. There was a strong voice now raised in protest, and a voice which made itself heard; and no one could have lived in Haworth as long as I did without having mixed up with everything else a strong memory of him who, day by day, and hour by hour, went about a living embodiment of resistance to all this flood of evil which for so long a time had swept over that part of the land.

Sunday after Sunday did we hear of the riotous games of foot-ball in which stones were used for balls; and how the parson had suddenly appeared and preached to the players till he frightened half of them away; and week by week there came to us tidings of a wedding at which a foot-race of nearly naked runners was brought to a stand

by the sudden apparition of "mad Grimshawe," as angry folks often called him; or, of an "arvill,"—that is, a funeral feast or revel, at which the half-drunken guests, just making ready to fight, were got to sit down and listen peaceably to solemn words of warning more suited to the occasion.

Then there were those wretched horse-races held on the moors over against us. Half the village got drunk on those occasions; and no one could say how much wickedness they caused; and year after year, as the time came round, was Mr. Grimshawe busy, trying by all sorts of persuasions, or even of threats, to put a stop to them. They went on, though, in spite of him, until one year in despair he set himself to pray most earnestly that they might be stopped. And it was very remarkable, I was going to say extraordinary, only that wouldn't be true; for it is not at all extraordinary for God to answer prayer; we should remark it, though, that whilst he was so engaged, the flood-gates of heaven seemed opened, and the rain came down in such torrents that no creature could stand or run on the ground. And so those races were stopped, and henceforth dropped altogether.

So, you see, all that time, and a long time after, indeed, seems to me now, when I look back on it, as just a time of hard struggling and work,—a busy time, when there was not much leisure to spend either in useless regrets or in building airy castles for the future.

But with the end of the summer there came a change and a variety.

I think it was some time in August that a messenger from Keighley brought aunt a letter which she read and re-read several times before she told us anything of its contents. She smiled once or twice as she did so; but most of the time she had rather a vexed expression on her face, which made us curious to know what was in it. At last, however, she spoke, and said that the letter came from a gentleman of the name of Graham; but that it contained a message which we should not be sorry to hear, viz., that Mrs. Scott wished to know if we could take her in for a while, during the long vacation, as she much desired to visit us that summer, when I should be coming of age.

"And you will, aunt, won't you?" we both cried at once; while Annie added, "And isn't Mr. William coming, too?"

Aunt said she would, and that both mother and son were coming, and she supposed we should be very glad.

That of course we were; nobody could tell how glad; but somehow aunt didn't seem so at all. And that was one thing that I never could understand about aunt; because, though she and Mrs. Scott had been such great friends in town, she didn't appear to want her to come down to see us. It seemed so odd, and used to make me

feel coldly towards her, and think her an unsympathising person; only she wasn't so in other things.

And then it was odd, too, about that letter. Why should Mr. Graham, or Mr. anybody else, send those news, and the Scotts not write themselves? We couldn't make that out either. However, they talked of coming soon; so we had to set to work and make ready; and there was no time to spend in wondering or guessing anything.

They came, after all, before we were quite ready for them; but I needn't stop to describe to you how Annie and I sat at the window-seat, watching for an hour beforehand, even though we knew that several things which we had made up our minds to do were still unfinished, just because we were too much excited to work; nor how, though we could from thence, through one little opening, see every one who came up the street, they yet managed to knock at the door just as we were saying to one another that something must have prevented them from coming at all, and that we might as well give them up. Nor need I tell you how intensely happy I was to be once more clasped in my dear Mrs. Scott's arms, while somebody who, as far as I could see for my tears, looked extremely like Mr. William, only that he was so much stouter and more active, was shaking hands with everybody, and laughing heartily at that wonderful perpendicular street of ours up which he had dragged his mother; nor how we all talked at once, just as if they had come

all that way only for a ten minutes' call ; nor how Annie's growth was wondered at, and she was pronounced almost a young woman, and seemed quite nervous when Mr. William tried to revive his old jokes with her ; and he himself looked as if he hardly knew how to treat her.

You must fancy all that.

It is all past and gone long ago ; and yet I often go over it all, though I know that some people would apply to it the wise king's motto, "Vanity of vanities ! All is vanity." "What signifies ? It is all past now ; and what difference does it make to you whether that meeting was a happy or an unhappy one ?"

Ah ! well, I don't believe that God ever meant His creatures either to damp their joys, the joys which He has given them, or to lighten their sorrows, the chastenings which He has sent, in that way ! I'll never believe that was the meaning of the preacher's words.

And I know it signified a great deal to me, and signifies still, and, as far as I can judge, will signify all through my existence ; for, like many other events, it has left its mark on me. You will smile at this by-and-by, my dear, when you learn the end of my story ; but, for all that, it is very likely that you may miss half my meaning.

They stayed with us all the rest of that long vacation ; and I must say that I couldn't have wished aunt to be more hospitable to our friends than she was. Indeed, she and Mrs. Scott became such great cronies that I often

felt rather jealous; but then the thing that made her so averse to having them under her roof must have got changed altogether, I suppose; and that made *her* seem so changeable.

But whatever it was, it wasn't Mrs. Scott who had changed. She was just the same dear, loving, earnest creature as ever, only brighter. Yes, she certainly was that; and no wonder, considering how her great anxiety had been lightened.

Why, Mr. William wasn't like the same man—so hearty and strong, so able to walk and to ride on horseback, even on our rough, hilly roads. Aunt couldn't help believing that now. And so light-hearted too. I don't mean riotous or even thoughtless. No; for he had the same serious way of looking at everything, and was too full of eager, ardent scheming to be ever one bit like most other young men whom I have met. Only now he seemed like one who had come to a conclusion about old puzzles,—like one who had made up his mind, and wasn't always doubting or questioning with himself, but knew what he wanted to do, and had an object worth living for.

And yet he was the same, too; but I needn't spend many words about that. You asked for *my* story, Annie, for the history of my young days; and though it makes me feel very egotistical, yet, having begun the tale, I will finish it, my dear. There were other joys in store for us

that summer, and the first was all the sweeter, because I had prayed for it so long.

We were going out early one morning : I remember it so well. Aunt Judith had one of her headaches, and very unwillingly she stayed behind ; for she thought her presence might have done good. It was to witness the departure of a great waggon laden with goods, and destined for Bradford market, the owner and manufacturer of which was a near neighbour of ours, and one with whom our aunt was on very friendly terms, but between whom and another manufacturer there was a feud of long standing, in consequence of which these startings had often been attended with great difficulty.

That may sound strange to a Southerner ; but, you see, among our people up there, men were not accustomed to conceal their feelings.

However, as she couldn't go, it was all the more important that we should ; so we rose betimes, and, under the protection of Cowan and Mr. William, we set out.

It was not far to walk, and a few minutes brought us to the spot where stood the half-packed waggon ; for most of the lading had been done overnight. But on our way, nevertheless, there met us, booted and spurred, and mounted on a steaming pony, a young man who evidently had been riding post-haste from Keighley, and bore a letter in his pocket, which, as he approached, he drew forth, and presented to Mr. William, saying as he did so,



some name which I did not catch, but which did not sound in my ears at all like the words "Mr. Scott."

However, Mr. William begged my excuses while he glanced at the inside; and, having done so, he hurriedly put it into his pocket, and we went on, though I thought that he seemed a little bit agitated; and as if for a minute or so he did not quite hear our remarks.

Now, I must tell you that it was still hardly light, for we were already getting towards the fall of the year, and these waggons start almost with the dawn; nevertheless, though it was so early, there were many persons already collected to witness the proceedings; such a departure being always a matter of great interest in the neighbourhood.

The packing was going on at a rapid rate; and meantime there was great consultation among the head men as to which horses should be used, and a vast deal of examination of the feet of the various beasts; whilst other men were testing the state of the ground on that long dangerous piece of slope down which the waggons must pass in order to reach the main road.

The pack-horses were making ready also to follow the great heavy carriage. These took shorter cuts over the high grounds, and left parcels of goods at those towns which are considered of so little importance that no highroad connects one with another. We went into the kitchen, where were assembled the master of the factory with his wife and a goodly troop of sons and daughters,

and in and out of which came all the people at will to fortify themselves with surprising draughts of beer for the day's work which lay before them.

It was the first time that any of us had witnessed a scene of the kind; but we came now by special invitation, and the good man that went by the name of Master Oliver, and was much revered in the neighbourhood, partly as coming of "a good old worsted stock," and partly on account of his being descended from one whom in his infancy the Great Protector had handled and blessed, was, I assure you, highly flattered by our company.

We were pressed to eat and pressed to drink with a cruel zeal which even London fine ladies scarcely possess; and when Annie and I had sipped a dish of tea made expressly for us, Mr. William had to come forward in our defence, and protest over and over again that our appetites did not come by that early hour—a piece of wit which produced roars of laughter from those kind-hearted souls.

Meantime, I, who knew the faces there, and was aware who ought to be present, and who ought not, had made out that a certain surly-looking fellow, wrapped up in a stiff great-coat with suspicious pockets, and a hat that slouched down over his eyes, was just the very man of whom we were afraid.

We knew that it was his object so to delay the departure of the goods, that they should be too late to realize the best prices; and gathered from the first words we

caught that he had been trying to attain that object by bringing a report of the badness of the roads, and was already in a temper by no means reassuring because his report was not credited. Indeed, it was plain that high words had already passed.

"Yo'll goa then, fur a' ah tell yer," resumed Master Rutherford, when, there being many people between us and them, they thought we had gone out again.

"Yoi, ah must, an' weather it through sum ha. T' beck wor crossed afore nah, ah s'pose," returned Master Oliver, doggedly; "an' if roads be ruff one way, we mun try another."

"Tell yer what it be, yo doan't credit what ah tell yer," almost roared the other; and then, with a most terrible oath, he added, "But ah woan't stond it, ah woan't!" and as he spoke he thrust his hand into his pocket in an ominous manner.

"Oh, let me speak," I said, as Mr. William stood before me; "let me show myself. They'll shed no blood before Annie and me."

But he held me back, and tried to make himself heard instead.

Annie, however, was before him; she slipped quietly in front of the disputants, and without taking any notice of their menacing attitudes, said,—

"Oh! Master Rutherford, are you here? Aunt was so sorry that she couldn't come. She would have been here

if she hadn't felt too ill; and she wanted so much to see you. Would you come up to-morrow night, and take a dish of tea with us? We are going to have a few of aunt's poor old people; and she is so much in want of a little help and support."

Then turning quickly round to Master Oliver, she added, with one of her most winning smiles,—

"And if this heavy work be over, *could* you spare time to join us, good Master Oliver?"

Mr. William had looked perfectly aghast when he saw her standing in front of those fierce men, and made a gesture as if about to rush forward and draw her away. But I stopped him, saying,—

"Oh! don't be afraid. She understands them; and they won't hurt her."

For indeed any one belonging to aunt was always as safe as if guarded by a band of soldiers in Haworth; and besides Annie had soothed down many a quarrel by her pretty ways. And Mr. William soon saw that there was no cause for fear; for the two men were quiet in a minute, and looked considerably taken aback by her presence. I didn't hear all that she said to them after that; for there was a great buzz of people coming in and going out as the preparations went on; but I could see that she pursued her advantage by chatting away merrily: and in a minute or two she had succeeded in getting Rutherford right out of the kitchen, as I afterwards found, on the

excuse of wanting some particular kind of little herb which she had seen the day before on a bank out of her reach, and some of which she desired to take home to make a tea for aunt's headache. As she passed out she gave me a look of triumph, and whispered,—

“Hasten them off.”

But Master Oliver did not need any urging. No sooner was he free from his adversary, than he mounted one of the horses, and telling the men that he should join them at a certain point on the road, was off at full speed, bidding them follow immediately.

That starting of the great heavy waggon, which was really a sight to see, was thus spoilt to us by the anxiety which we felt that all should be clear away before the others returned.

“Yo should coame heare i' Jennewurry,” said one of the men to me; “beant half a soight withouten t' lanterns glinting an' flashing ahl about, an' t' mon a goin' honds an' knees t' foind t' roight places for t' horses' feet! 'Taint nought wurth tawkin' abaht i' t' sommer-toime.”

The summer was really gone, however, by that time; and the morning air was so chill, that as soon as the departure had taken place we hurried on at a brisk pace in the direction which they told us Annie had taken.

And no sooner had we got clear of the people, than Mr. William took the packet, and handing it to me, said,—

“This is what I got this morning.”

"Dear Mr. Graham," it began, and then proceeded to state that the enclosed had come for Mistress Judith Conyngham, and was now immediately forwarded to him according to orders left behind.

"A letter for aunt," I said, feeling rather bewildered ; "but I don't understand who Mr. Graham is, nor why it should have been sent on to you, Mr. Scott."

"No?" he replied. "Then you have not discovered yet that Mr. Scott has disappeared? Well, never mind, that is of no consequence. If I were you, I would open the letter, which is certainly for you, and not for your aunt."

"For me!" I exclaimed, breaking the seal ; "oh ! it can't be ; I had given up all hopes."

And I trembled so violently that I was obliged to sit down by the roadside to read my dear brother's first letter.

It was some time, though, before I could get on ; my eyes were so dizzy, nor would they clear until I had shed a good many tears. Indeed, the relief to find that he was alive was so great that at first I felt as if I could bear nothing else.

"You ought to have had this letter sooner, Miss Conyngham," said Mr. William, very kindly pretending not to notice that I was crying ; "but I always told you not to despair. It reached England, I know, in June last, and somebody is considerably to blame. I shall have to

make out who. There was a letter from another lieutenant at Macao, to his brother, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that month; and I feel certain this came by the same vessel. If so, it is very abominable of somebody. I may confess now to having felt very uneasy since then; only I would not tell you. Thank God, my fears were needless, you see."

At that moment Annie came running up, accompanied by Master Rutherford; and Mr. William drew him aside to explain the cause of our agitation while we read the letter together.

He told me afterwards that tears streamed down the rough man's eyes as he stood looking on while we pored over that precious letter. It was a long one, and took us a long time to read; for it told of the loss of most of their vessels, of many sufferings, and of the death of many poor men; but Charley said that they had done much harm to the Spaniards, and were resting and recruiting there at Macao, before the *Centurion* set out for her homeward voyage. He was well himself, and longing, dear fellow, to see us both, more than he could tell.

Oh! how we did thank God for that letter! And as soon as we had finished it, we got up, eager to carry it home to aunt; but before we could speak a word Master Rutherford came forward, and said,—

"Well, young ladies, ah be roight down glad ah ain't spoilt yer plaisure; but t' truth is ah wor just goin' to

spoil t' mon out theare. We 'a had a feud ever sin ah wor born ; an' it must be settled one doiy or t'other."

"Master Rutherford," I exclaimed, "that feud *is* settled now. It *must* be, or you care neither for us nor for our aunt. You will spoil our joy *now* if you don't say the word this day; and give us your hand upon it."

But he drew back and hesitated. "No;" he said he "could never do that; a Yorkshireman could not forget an old grudge."

"Then a Yorkshireman cannot be forgiven," said Mr. William; "nor can a Yorkshireman ever hope to reach heaven. Remember, the rule is for all: 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you.' Good-bye, Mr. Rutherford. This would have been a happy day but for you. Mistress Conyngham will be sore vexed when she hears of it. She will tell you so herself to-morrow night."

"Noa," returned Rutherford, "ah dunna think ah'll come now; for ah can't abear a vexing o' herr."

"What! you will keep up a grudge, and break a promise!" returned Mr. William. "Well, good-bye."

And so we walked on; but not for very long; for in a few minutes, as we were just within a short distance of Dawgreen, we heard heavy steps behind us, and the next minute Mr. Rutherford was asking just for a few minutes' talk with the young gentleman. So Annie and I ran on alone, leaving him to follow us.



But neither of the men came next evening, for Oliver had not returned from his journey, and Rutherford was laid down with an inflammation on the chest.

A month after this,—I know the date quite well,—Mr. Wesley had been with Mr. Grimshawe some time; and we had vast crowds every Sunday at church, and in the churchyard, and sometimes as many as twelve hundred communicants; it had been a most delightful time; well, soon after he left, Mrs. Scott, Annie, Mr. William, and I, had all been taking a ramble one afternoon on the moor, and had gone on and on, out of sight of the village altogether, when we met Mr. Grimshawe returning from one of his missionary excursions; and he having business with my aunt, dismounted, and walked beside her, leading his horse all the way home, and giving Annie a small parcel of hymn-books to carry for him, which he wished to distribute at some cottages as he went along. They had not gone far before Mrs. Scott turned and begged us who were following to stop and leave a message for her at a lone house that we had to pass; and there we were delayed some minutes, so that the others were quite out of sight when we started again. I wanted to walk on quickly, and overtake them, but Mr. William would keep loitering to gather wild flowers.

"I shall not get any of these kinds at Oxford," he said; "and soon, you know, I must be back at work there. I hope to be at real work soon; for, you see, so much of

my life has been spent in forced quiet and study ; and life is short, even the longest. I want to be using it while I have it, and not living only for myself."

It was hard to know what to answer. I never had thought he had lived for himself, only just then something kept me back from saying so.

"I shall try to get off some of my terms," he added after a pause. "The bishops are not strict just now ; and Rowlands, that fine fellow in Wales, never went to college at all, and he was only twenty when he took orders."

"And are you thinking of doing so, Mr. Scott ?" I replied ; for he had never spoken of his plans.

"There is only one other thing that I desire as much," he answered earnestly. "Perhaps there ought to be nothing so near my heart, but it wouldn't be true to say there wasn't ; and this is an older desire still."

I think he expected me to ask what it might be ; but I thought it no business of mine, so simply said,—

"It must be a very happy thing always to have it one's business to live as Mr. Grimshawe does. I think, with all the opposition which he has to bear, and the dangers and hardships, too, he is one of the happiest men I know."

"So do I," returned my companion ; "and I should think myself honoured indeed, if I am ever one-twentieth part as useful. There was a pause again after that ; and we walked on in silence. At length he broke it by asking,—

"Do you remember, Miss Conyngham ; do you remember a certain afternoon when we were speaking together of a sermon of Mr. Whitefield's, and I said I was *afraid* that he was right ? "

"Yes ; I remember it well," I answered, without looking at him.

"Well," he said, "I may say I have *known* that he was now for a good while, as surely as I know of my own existence. And many other things I know which I didn't then ; thank God for it. Yes," he continued fervently,—

"From various cares my heart retires ;  
Though deep and boundless its desires,  
I'm now to please but One :  
He, before whom the elders bow,  
With Him is all my business now,  
And with the souls that are His own.

This is my joy, which ne'er can fail,  
To see my Saviour's arm prevail ;  
To mark the steps of grace ;  
How new-born souls, convinced of sin,  
His blood revealed to them within,  
Extol my Lord in every place.

With these my happy lot is cast ;  
Through the world's deserts, rude and waste,  
Or through its gardens fair ;  
Whether the storm of malice sweeps,  
Or all in dead supineness sleeps ;  
Still, to go on be my whole care."

It is very pleasant to hear any one speak so ; I don't think there can be a purer joy to a Christian. But I knew all this about Mr. William before he told me. It was quite impossible to have been with him any time without finding it out.

"I never heard those lines before, Mr. Scott," I said. "They are very beautiful."

"Mr. Scott is not here, I assure you, Miss Conyng-ham," he answered. "It was William Graham who repeated those lines to you. William Scott could not have remained at Oxford all this time for want of funds which have terribly dwindled away during his illness. But William Graham, inheritor of the late William Graham's property in Essex, under certain conditions, has enough and to spare,—enough, that is, to do all that he has any ambition for."

I couldn't understand at first ; for I had never heard of such a change before ; and I am afraid he thought me rather stupid. But other words which he said to me directly after that, confused me even more ; though they explained a good many things, too ; and though those words brought unbidden tears into my eyes, and caused me to slip in by the back-door as soon as we reached home, and run up into my own room out of everybody's sight, I can't say that they made me unhappy. And yet I had a good cry about them ; so that when Mrs. Scott came to me after a little while, and called

me her very own dear daughter, and Aunt Judith followed to give me her blessing, I don't think they knew what to make of me.

And, Annie, I see it has come upon you almost as much of a surprise as it did on me ; but that is no wonder ; for how could you possibly guess who I have been telling you about all this time.

Well, it was less than a year after that, and the very evening before my wedding-day, that your dear father walked in upon us just as we were all sitting down to supper. And a fine, tall, handsome young man he had grown indeed ! It seemed as if he had just been brought home at that very time that my cup of happiness might be quite full.

All London had been ringing with the news of the return of the *Centurion*, and of that famous voyage round the world, for several days before ; but news of any kind travelled slowly so far north ; and Charley had determined to be himself the messenger ; so he pushed on post haste. Dear old fellow ! He had not a notion what he was coming in for ; and proud though he was of having the honour of giving me away, I don't think he half liked to find that the first place in Judith's heart was gone.

It was a pleasant little company that we had at Dawgreen just then. There were Colonel and Mrs. Cooper, who had actually come all that weary long way to be

present, and had brought Mrs. Norris with them. Good, kind old soul! She didn't find much in her way to do for me; for we were somewhat primitive up there; but I don't think she minded that, having herself taken up with a very plain manner of adorning herself, much of that kind that Mr. Wesley approved; nor had she been long in the house before I discovered that it was no longer any secret that she had joined one of his societies in London. "It all came out," she said, "when poor Mrs. Cooper was at the point of death; and though, on account of her great attachment to her mistress, she was allowed to keep her place, yet she often got many a sharp word such as she never used to hear from her. So she thought it fine to be among so many of her own sort a while."

Then there were Mrs. Betty and little Molly, too, who were on a visit to us; and so we made up a nice little band, having Mr. Grimshawe with us at the feast afterwards, and I trust his Master too; for we heartily invited His presence.

And now, Annie, I have finished the story of my young days, and of my Haworth life, though I ought to tell you before I end that I had the great joy of hearing my husband preach in the old church, where I so often had the privilege of listening to Mr. Grimshawe, the first Sunday after our wedding. We left Dawgreen a week after that, and went down to work in the middle of

England; but, as you know, it never has been our lot to make a nest for ourselves long in any one place. However, that little matters. Now is the time for work; and in due season the rest will come.

THE END.









